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# RAFFAELE PETTAZZONI

DA

DARIO SABBATUCCI

Roma

Nel lontano 1924 R. Pettazzoni poté apparire ad uno studioso svizzero<sup>1)</sup> come il capo di una scuola italiana di storia delle religioni procedente dallo spirito che aveva in Benedetto Croce il suo rappresentante più comprensivo. Niente di più vero e niente di meno vero ad un tempo. O diremmo: quel giudizio guardava ad una realtà che si sarebbe avverata soltanto qualche decennio più tardi. In quel momento, invece, lo stesso Pettazzoni sentì il bisogno di correggerlo: „coloro che figurano come miei aderenti... sono, credo, assai lontani dal riconoscere in me un capogruppo; e soprattutto colui che mi è stato dato come ispiratore e maestro... è il primo a non volerne sapere di tale discepolo”<sup>2)</sup>. Quale era dunque la equivoca situazione di quegli anni?

Pettazzoni si presentava al mondo scientifico in funzione critica degli indirizzi storico-religiosi correnti, e proponeva una soluzione storicistica (ossia tipicamente italiana, come potremmo dire riferendoci al dominante crocianesimo) alle questioni connesse con l'essenza, gli scopi e i metodi di quella nuova disciplina la cui stessa denominazione appariva ancora incerta e oscillante tra storia e scienza delle religioni. Era dunque un caposcuola, e poteva essere detto crociano per l'impronta che dava al suo insegnamento. Ma in realtà una scuola non c'era. C'era lui, Pettazzoni, l'unico, allora e per molti anni in seguito, storico delle religioni in senso stretto esistente in Italia (ovvero: non classicista, orientalista ecc. solo saltuariamente, o anche tendenzialmente, interessato alle religioni del proprio campo di studi). Il 1924 segnò il riconoscimento accademico della presenza in Italia di uno storico delle religioni, Pettazzoni, con l'istituzione in Roma della prima cattedra italiana intitolata a questa disciplina<sup>3)</sup>. Il 17 gennaio di quell'anno R.

1) C. A. BERNOULLI, *Johan Bachofen und das Natursymbol*, Basel 1924, p. 653.

2) *Intorno ad una prolusione*, SMSR I (1925), p. 152.

3) L'unico precedente risaliva agli anni 1886-1892 quando B. Labanca, professore di filosofia morale a Pisa, fu autorizzato a tenere corsi di storia delle religioni all'Università di Roma. Nel 1892 fu istituita la cattedra di Storia del Cristianesimo e il Labanca ne divenne titolare, lasciando così l'insegnamento storico-religioso.

Pettazzoni iniziò il suo magistero con una lezione inaugurale dedicata allo „Svolgimento e carattere della storia delle religioni”<sup>4</sup>).

Il mondo culturale crociano fu tutt'altro che disposto ad accettare quelle premesse, e lo stesso Croce reagì scagliandosi violentemente contro la storia delle religioni come materia d'insegnamento universitario: non era né poteva essere, per lui, vera storia, ma soltanto „collezionismo bibliografico ed erudito”; quanto all'istituzione della cattedra romana, la trovava un atto completamente inutile ai fini della cultura, affermando che essa non era dovuta „ad alcun bisogno né speculativo né morale, ma unicamente ad un bisogno di erudizione, per far che l'Italia non restasse indietro agli altri paesi nel culto di tali studi, che anche in Italia vi fosse gente che avesse pratica della relativa letteratura, e, come poteva, l'accrescesse”<sup>5</sup>). Eppure la memorabile prolusione del 17 gennaio non conteneva davvero gli elementi per provocare una simile reazione, anzi era tutta una promessa per lo storicismo italiano al quale si offriva un nuovo campo di esercizio, mentre al contempo si sperava di imporre (o proporre) alla cultura internazionale il rigore del pensiero crociano. Ma forse era proprio la prima delle due prospettive che veniva superbamente rifiutata.

Sta di fatto che Pettazzoni in quella lezione inaugurale, sia rilevando lo stato degli studi, sia additando la propria via, poneva la storia come unico termine di paragone. Nella esigenza storica vedeva il punto d'incontro, l'unico possibile, anzi il necessario, delle due originarie scuole di studi religiosi, l'antropologica che aveva preso l'avvio da Tylor e la filologica che muoveva da Max Müller; finché l'una si fece scuola storico-culturale e l'altra storico-filologica coincidendo nella trasformazione dell'antica *scienza* in *storia* delle religioni. „Sotto il segno della storia, l'iniziale dualismo era superato: superato idealmente, nel senso di un'unicità ch'era insieme universalità, superato nel concetto di una storia delle religioni (in senso soggettivo) adeguata all'intera storia religiosa umana (in senso oggettivo), una storia che abbraccia le religioni inferiori e le superiori, le morte e le viventi, le primitive e le attuali, compreso il Cristianesimo...”<sup>6</sup>). E si poneva, quindi, le domande: come può praticamente l'etnologo farsi orientalista, classicista, ecc. per diventare storico delle religioni? O il classicista farsi etnologo, o l'orien-

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4) *Svolgimento e carattere della storia delle religioni*, Bari 1924.

5) „La Critica”, 22 (1924), p. 313.

6) *Svolgimento e caratteri...* cit., p. 14.

talista classicista, ecc.? Ovvero: da che cosa deriva universalità alla storia delle religioni? I manuali in collaborazione (ad ogni specialista il proprio capitolo) e i congressi (ad ogni specialista la propria sezione) gli apparivano evidentemente rimedi empirici, occasioni d'incontro, realizzazioni effimere, ma non certo soluzioni metodologiche: siamo dunque ben lontani dalla prospettiva di un collezionismo bibliografico contro cui poteva indirizzare i suoi strali la critica crociana. La soluzione era invece da Pettazzoni additata nel comparativismo storico, ossia in quel comparativismo che era alle origini stesse della scienza delle religioni, che a tale scienza aveva in effetti dato vita sia col Tylor che col Max Müller, ma che doveva finalmente cessare di essere fonte di suggestioni per piegarsi a divenire un reale strumento di ricerca storica. La comparazione poteva farsi fonte di sapere storico (non di erudizione!) purché non riducesse i fatti comparati ad un medesimo livello, senza prospettive, identificandoli e spiegandoli l'un con l'altro astrattamente da ogni reale svolgimento storico; lo poteva, invece, quando, dopo aver proposto la comparabilità, si cercasse di rilevare le differenze sostanziali e di sviluppo dei fatti esaminati, le quali, e proprio le quali, servono a distinguere e ad individuare le singole formazioni, e a fare così vera storia perché la storia „non può farsi se non distinguendo, ossia individuando” 7).

Si postulava, insomma, l'uso cosciente, critico e metodico della comparazione, la quale, diremmo inconsapevolmente, aveva offerto l'occasione alle prime indagini scientifiche sulle religioni. Non si dovevano, d'altro canto, porre limiti alla ricerca storica, ma anzi si voleva offrire a questa una possibilità nuova, la possibilità di spaziare oltre confini insperati, in quanto la comparazione che rilevava „concordanze” e „discordanze” di fatti storici, stimolava senza dubbio la ricerca intesa a spiegare le une e ad usare le altre come elementi di qualificazione, finché si giungesse all'ambita mèta della ricostruzione di una „storia anteriore al documento”. Ché tale è nella maggior parte dei casi la storia religiosa dei vari popoli, ed essa rimane inconfondibile finché non acquista certe insospettite dimensioni svelate soltanto dalla comparazione. „A base dei nostri studi”, dichiarava Pettazzoni additando la sintesi storica che deve emergere dalla comparazione, „e delle nostre ricerche, porremo il principio che ogni singolo fatto religioso è una

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7) *Svolgimento e caratteri...* cit., p. 17.

formazione, e come tale è lo sbocco — e quindi l'indice — di uno svolgimento anteriore e insieme il punto di partenza di un ulteriore sviluppo; ed un fatto storico-religioso sarà per noi sufficientemente spiegato solo quando sia debitamente inserito nella sua propria linea di sviluppo" 8).

Tutto nella storia: ecco in sostanza i termini entro cui Pettazzoni prometteva di esercitare il suo magistero. E allora che fondamento avevano le reazioni negative dello storicismo ufficiale? In realtà non era il metodo che, sebbene innestato al comparativismo evoluzionistico, suonava del tutto eterodosso al mondo culturale italiano; in realtà l'eresia era un'altra. Quel che tutto il discorso presupponeva, e quindi veniva esplicitamente affermato, era il valore autonomo, categoriale della religione, che solo poteva farne l'oggetto di una speciale disciplina storica. E Pettazzoni, pur promettendo di considerare, quando si poteva, uno svolgimento religioso „in rapporto allo svolgimento degli altri aspetti della civiltà, cioè dell'arte, della filosofia, del diritto, ecc." 9), non poteva fare a meno di denunciare il fatto incontrastabile che „la storia delle religioni conosce più di un momento in cui il valore della religione si affermò in modo così assoluto ed esclusivo che la sua affermazione si accompagnò alla negazione e rinnegazione di tutti gli altri valori della civiltà" 10). Ed era proprio questa autonomia della religione che non veniva accettata dal Croce; donde l'ostilità espressa nei confronti del nuovo insegnamento, nonostante l'indirizzo decisamente storico che ad esso dava Pettazzoni.

Si badi bene: non era in fondo un reale impedimento teorico, filosofico, di principio, quello per cui si negava la possibilità di una storia delle religioni. Ovvero, poteva, anzi doveva essere enunciato come tale da un sistema che risolveva la religione nelle categorie dell'etico e del filosofico, e magari anche dell'estetico; ma in verità quella presa di posizione derivava unicamente da una mancanza di familiarità con le cose della religione, con quel nuovissimo campo di studi; ed era una deficienza caratteristica della tradizione culturale italiana. Insomma era esso stesso un atteggiamento storicamente condizionato, come un acuto storicista fedele al suo metodo avrebbe potuto sin d'allora rilevare. Non è questo il luogo per stabilirne le cause, ma basti rendersi conto degli

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8) *Svolgimento e caratteri...* cit., p. 23.

9) *ibidem*.

10) *Svolgimento e caratteri...* cit., p. 24.



effetti: la religione non veniva assunta al rango di categoria autonoma, e di conseguenza si negava la possibilità di fare della storia delle religioni. Un circolo vizioso procedeva dalla ignoranza o dalla disconoscenza dei fatti religiosi; la comparazione che sola era in grado di rilevare, accertare e in qualche modo qualificare questi fatti, per poi proporli alla sintesi storica, veniva respinta come „contraddizione assoluta della storia” (A. Omodeo); e dunque i fatti religiosi e la relativa problematica restavano irrimediabilmente fuori del sistema.

Ma se da un lato Pettazzoni trovava nella cultura nazionale una vera e propria „insensibilità” nei riguardi dei fatti storico-religiosi, come egli stesso ebbe più di una volta a definirla, e si riprometteva con il suo magistero „di formare la coscienza storico-religiosa degli Italiani”<sup>11)</sup>, da un altro lato si trovava a che fare con l’„insensibilità” altrettanto grave che le scuole straniere di storia delle religioni mostravano di fronte alle più elementari esigenze del metodo storico, che per l’insegnamento crociano era ormai entrato a far parte del patrimonio culturale italiano.

Come stiamo presentando le cose, parrebbe che Pettazzoni si trovasse a dover lottare contro due fronti, ma non fu certamente questa la sua posizione, né il suo atteggiamento. E’ certo che nella sua attività non s’ingolfò mai in discussioni sul metodo con gli storicisti italiani, né d’altra parte si adagiò in una sterile e facile critica metodologica rivolta contro i risultati storicamente inaccettabili di certi studiosi stranieri. Agli uni e agli altri, invece, egli rispose con la *sua* ricerca, nella quale andò sempre più affinando il metodo storico, e sempre meglio vagliando le tesi scaturite dagli studi storico-religiosi delle varie scuole. Egli cercava l’incontro dei due fronti che non vedeva rivolti contro di lui, ma l’uno contro l’altro per reciproca incomprensione. Il conflitto, d’altra parte, come l’incontro, non poteva verificarsi che nella sua persona, mancando ai due fronti ogni altra occasione di contatto all’infuori dell’unico storico delle religioni che potesse vantare l’Italia. E in lui il conflitto-incontro si risolse in attenzione, in cosciente attrazione agli insegnamenti, piuttosto che alle critiche negative, che in entrambi i campi gli era dato di scorgere.

Alle obiezioni di un Omodeo che in nome delle pregiudiziali storicistiche negava la validità dei risultati ottenuti con la *Confessione dei*

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11) *Svolgimento e caratteri...* cit., p. 31.

*peccati*, e lo invitava a limitarsi negli ulteriori lavori alla pura e semplice raccolta e compilazione di un repertorio di documenti „con il necessario commento filologico ed erudito”, Pettazzoni rispondeva assicurandolo pacatamente quanto fermamente che non si sarebbe mai attenuto a quel consiglio, „che sarebbe un rinunciare, poco o molto che valga, al proprio pensiero. Il quale pensiero, per sua intima esigenza e natura, ha bisogno di procedere appoggiandosi alle testimonianze, e perciò le ricerca e le studia”. Così egli difendeva la sua ricerca, non tanto per se stessa, quanto per il metodo adottato, quel comparativismo aprioristicamente respinto dagli storicisti ma che egli sentiva essenziale per lo svolgimento della propria disciplina; egli era pronto a discuterne la validità documentaria, a ricercarne l'uso corretto secondo una critica storicistica, a moderarlo metodicamente, a tutto insomma, ma non già a respingerlo in blocco soltanto in base a pregiudizi d'ordine speculativo. Mentre accettava e faceva sue le tesi dell'Omodeo per il quale “gli schemi religiosi non possono bastare a costruire il processo evolutivo della storia”: insufficienti sì ma anche necessari, egli tuttavia replicava, perché sono il solo mezzo di conoscenza storica dell'esperienza religiosa, e, comunque, l'insufficienza può essere dedotta non aprioristicamente, bensì al vaglio della trattazione. E ancora: perfetto accordo con l'affermazione dell'Omodeo secondo il quale „nell'intuizione del processo storico ci interessa il trasformarsi e l'arricchirsi di un istituto e di un rito in una vita nuova”, dal momento che egli era ben cosciente di aver teso proprio a ciò quando in riferimento alle permanenze nelle forme della confessione ha cercato di rilevare, ogni volta che era possibile, lo svolgimento di tali forme „nel senso di una sempre maggiore interiorità di esperienza e di vita” (nel caso specifico, come egli diceva, dalla *religio religans* alla *religio liberans*). E via dicendo...<sup>12)</sup>.

Rispetto all'altro fronte, l'atteggiamento di Pettazzoni, pur saldamente vincolato alla tradizione storicistica, era singolarmente determinato da un vero e proprio fascino per l'opera di quegli stranieri che, al contrario degli Italiani, avevano tanta dimestichezza con le cose della religione. Li trovava quel che la tradizione culturale italiana non poteva offrirgli: l'affermazione dei valori autonomi della religione. E maggiore diveniva il suo interesse quanto più questi valori venivano rilevati,

<sup>12)</sup> Cfr. R. PETTAZZONI, *Saggi di storia delle religioni e di mitologia*, Roma 1946, p. XVI sgg.

persino esaltati, con un approfondimento e una „sensibilità” (è la sua definizione preferita) che soprattutto lo colpiva e lo spronava a far partecipi anche gli Italiani di questa coscienza storico-religiosa. Tale è il caso — tanto per fare un nome tra i più illustri — di G. van der Leeuw. Nessuno più dell'insigne studioso olandese poteva apparire, ed era, lontano dalle posizioni di uno storicista <sup>13)</sup>, eppure le sue scoperte s'imponevano all'ammirata considerazione di Pettazzoni, che, quali che fossero le riserve generali sul metodo, vi scorgeva profonde e suggestive verità, o, comunque, una materia sempre degna di studio e di riflessione. Quando nel 1925 comparve l'*Einführung in die Phänomenologie der Religion* di G. van der Leeuw, Pettazzoni salutò il volumetto „ricco di suggestioni geniali” che affermava „l'unicità e la specificità dell'esperienza religiosa”; vedeva „nel sorgere e nell'affermarsi di questa scuola [da R. Otto a van der Leeuw], il sintomo cospicuo della necessità, sempre più sentita e sempre meglio avvertita dalla storia delle religioni, di superare la crisi dell'atomismo e del collezionismo in una sintesi unificatrice”; manifestava un giudizio apertamente positivo su „certe analisi onde taluni fenomeni sono presentati in una luce nuova: tali le osservazioni sul valore religioso del *tabu*, tale la critica del valore religioso del politeismo olimpico, tale l'apprezzamento della profonda religiosità interiore dei Romani sotto la soprastruttura del loro sistema giuridico” <sup>14)</sup>. Tanta stima non verrà meno otto anni dopo, quando si troverà a recensire la più complessa e organica *Phänomenologie der Religion* <sup>15)</sup>, non verrà meno per tutta l'opera di van der Leeuw, di cui più volte sollecitò la collaborazione nei suoi „Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni”, e con cui si legò in affettuosa amicizia. E quando un giorno si troverà a formulare in piena coscienza il giudizio negativo sull'antistoricismo della fenomenologia di van der Leeuw, non potrà trattenersi — oltre i limiti di una convenzionale cortesia — dal riconoscere ad essa il merito di aver opposto una illuminata reazione al filologismo che minacciava di soffocare sul nascere la nuova scienza storico-religiosa <sup>16)</sup>.

Questa ammirazione, questo entusiasmo per l'attività di studiosi

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13) Cfr. la critica storicistica a G. VAN DER LEEUW condotta da E. DE MARTINO, *Fenomenologia religiosa e storicismo assoluto*, SMSR 24-25 (1953-1954), p. I sgg.

14) SMSR I (1925), p. 231 sgg.

15) SMSR 9 (1933), p. 241 sgg.

16) *Essays on the History of Religions*, Leiden 1954, p. 217.

stranieri spesso agli antipodi dalle sue posizioni — come nel caso esemplare di van der Leeuw — che si fondava sul riconoscimento di una loro indiscussa „sensibilità” in materia di religioni, si estrinsecava nelle forme più varie, che, di volta in volta, potevano apparire come obbiettività di giudizio, come semplice cortesia, e persino come abilità diplomatica <sup>17</sup>). E ciò proprio perché il fascino che invariabilmente subiva non gli impediva, d’altre parte, di saggiare sul terreno storico quei risultati che altrimenti restavano inaccettabili astrazioni, per suggestive e convincenti che fossero. Anzi gli serviva da sprone e da ispirazione per tutta l’opera sua. E man mano che questa procedeva egli veniva affermando sempre di più se stesso, opponendosi fermanente alle deviazioni irrazionalistiche da qualunque parte venissero. A costo di apparire un passatista legato all’ultimo positivismo nei confronti dei nuovi profeti dell’irrazionalismo, rimase saldo al suo metodo per il quale tutto va spiegato con la storia e nella storia. E’ qui il suo modernismo: non opponeva certo alle tesi irrazionalistiche una riesumazione del razionalismo evoluzionistico o filologico, ma le superava di fatto storicizzando metodicamente i fenomeni religiosi concretamente studiati e sottratti ad ogni suggestione para-scientifica.

A trenta anni di distanza dalla prolusione del 1924, Pettazzoni guarderà dietro di sé: la scienza delle religioni, gli studi italiani, gli studi stranieri, i contrasti, le polemiche, le incomprensioni, la propria opera, tutto diventa chiaro per lui che ha la coscienza di aver superato i limiti di una determinabile fase storica. Egli è già nel futuro, e di quel passato è senza dubbio in grado di dare una lucida sintesi:

*In Italia la storia della religione, o „delle religioni” come si usò dire su l’esempio francese, compare come studio specifico negli anni intorno al 1900. Sorta per riflesso della cultura europea, essa ha avuto fra noi momenti di effimera risonanza, ma non è ancora riuscita ad impegnare in misura adeguata la nostra cultura. Il pensiero teologico l’ha guardata con diffidenza; il pensiero laico con scarso interesse... Il modernismo, portatore di cultura religiosa, aveva a cuore la religione più che la storia. Lo storicismo, dal canto suo, più la storia che la religione.*

*Comunque, la storia della religione ha ormai preso piede fra noi con la sua viria problematica, teoretica e pratica. E, nonostante le difficoltà, potrà vincere la sua battaglia se avrà una esatta nozione dei suoi*

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17) Cfr. „Numen” I (1954), p. I f.t., dove G. WIDENGREN in un indirizzo augurale a R. PETTAZZONI fa espressa menzione della di lui „habilité diplomatique”.

*compiti e dei suoi limiti. Sunt bona mixta malis. Una storia italiana della religione, senza radici nella tradizione nostrana, svincolata ab initio da istanze teologiche e confessionali precostituite, è forse in vantaggio a confronto con altri Paesi, dove gli studi religiosi, per quanto progrediti, risentono tuttavia la pressione di una tradizione teologica, quale ancora si riflette, non foss'altro, nel persistere quae e là di un latente dualismo fra religioni bibliche e religioni non bibliche, ultimo ostacolo ad una risoluzione totale della multiforme fenomenologia religiosa nella unità del pensiero storico.*

*Il quale per adempiere al suo compito proprio, che è la formazione di una coscienza storico-religiosa, lungi dal restringere il concetto di religione ad una determinata religione assunta come la religione in senso assoluto, deve anzi postulare un concetto così largo della religione che comprenda nella sua universalità tutte le forme particolari, in ciò risolvendosi concretamente l'universalità stessa dell'indagine storico-religiosa, anziché in una chimerica storia universale delle religioni.*

*Questi concetti non mi furono sempre così chiari in mente come sono ora. Nè io li appresi inizialmente a nessuna scuola; anzi si vennero chiarendo e svolgendo gradualmente nel corso stesso del mio lavoro. E di questo progressivo farsi di un pensiero sperimentato e vissuto son visibili i segni nel complesso dei miei scritti... 18).*

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Uno degli obbiettivi di R. Pettazzoni, quello forse che sentiva più immediato, addirittura urgente in quanto capace di condizionare la sua stessa attività scientifica, era — si è detto — di dare alla cultura italiana una coscienza storico-religiosa. A tal fine si adoperò infaticabilmente per la pubblicazione di collezioni di opere dedicate alla disciplina pressoché nuova per il pubblico italiano.

„Storia delle Religioni” è il titolo della prima collana, la cui fondazione risale al 1920. Vi comparvero monografie dedicate allo zoroastrismo, al buddhismo, alla religione greca, alla babilonese-assira, alla hittita, al pensiero religioso indiano: lavori tutti più o meno strettamente storico-filologici; a questi tuttavia si affiancarono anche ricerche a livello storico-religioso, sia in traduzione (Webster) sia originali, dovute queste allo stesso Pettazzoni, l'unico italiano allora in grado di

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18) *L'onniscienza di Dio*, Torino 1955, p. IX sg.

condurre tali studi. Né è da dimenticare che per la collezione „Storia delle Religioni”. C. Kerényi scrisse una sua opera fondamentale, *La religione antica*, con la quale schiuse ai classicisti, e non solo italiani, nuove e feconde vie d'interpretazione dei fatti religiosi greci e romani <sup>19)</sup>.

A partire dal 1929, la collana fu fiancheggiata da una nuova serie intitolata „Testi e documenti per la storia delle religioni”, che l'editore Zanichelli fu indotto a pubblicare grazie „al nuovo impulso dato in Italia agli studi finora trascurati di storia delle religioni per l'iniziativa feconda e l'opera realizzatrice di R. Pettazzoni”. Si poté così mettere alla portata di ogni lettore italiano la consultazione di testi sacri giapponesi, indiani, mesopotamici, tradotti e sobriamente commentati da specialisti <sup>20)</sup>.

Continuò, dopo la lunga parentesi bellica e post-bellica, gli scopi di quest'ultima collezione, una nuova collana intitolata ai „Classici della religione”, nella quale dopo un primo volume che traduceva in italiano l'*Edda*, per la prima volta integralmente, s'intendevano accogliere accanto ai libri sacri orientali i classici del Cristianesimo (quali S. Agostino, Lutero ecc.) <sup>21)</sup>.

Ma l'originalità di Pettazzoni nella attività di divulgazione storico-religiosa si manifestò soprattutto quando concepì il grandioso disegno di offrire al lettore italiano la traduzione del maggior numero possibile di miti, tratti dal patrimonio culturale dei popoli studiati dall'etnologia. Egli aveva chiara coscienza di come una simile opera si muovesse decisamente sulla via di un rinnovamento (e rinvigorimento) dei tradizionali *studia humanitatis*, nel senso più pieno del termine, dai quali la storia delle religioni discende e ai quali ritorna apportando un incomparabile contributo di materia e di energia. Egli avvertiva la necessità di un futuro *Corpus mythorum*, del quale intendeva gettare le basi con la sua audace iniziativa informata ad un sincero spirito umanistico, „di un nuovo umanesimo ecumenico intonato ai tempi d'oggi e forse ancor più di domani” <sup>22)</sup>. Sapeva bene egli di poter valutare il lavoro

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19) „Storia delle Religioni” fu pubblicata dall'editore Zanichelli di Bologna dal 1920 al 1940, comprendendo una serie di 14 volumi.

20) „Testi e documenti di storia religioni”, edita da Zanichelli, Bologna, dal 1929 al 1937, presentò 7 volumi.

21) I „Classici della Religione”, editi da Sansoni, Firenze, pubblicarono tre volumi dal 1951 al 1959, anno della scomparsa di Pettazzoni.

22) *Miti e Leggende* I, Torino 1948, p. XVI.

a cui si accingeva „non soltanto per la novità sua e per la opportunità di rendere largamente accessibili agli Italiani tante singolari testimonianze di uno spirito esotico; né solo perché nei miti e nelle leggende dei singoli popoli si vede riflessa la vita loro e il costume e la civiltà...; ma anche in senso più largamente umanistico, nel senso ideale dell'essere uomini, e dunque adatti ad intendere ogni discorso umano, per quanto estraneo e remoto, anche lo stentato balbettare dei Boscimani cacciatori, anche il monotono raccontare degli Australiani totemisti, nonché il vago favoleggiare degli Indonesiani matriarcali, su su fino ai capolavori di questa letteratura non scritta, ormai avulsi o quasi dalla originaria matrice e ricchi di accenti universalmente umani, come la leggenda caraiba di Macconaura dominata dal tema della vendetta quale forza cieca ed oscura simile al fato delle tragedie eschilee, o l'altra sud-americana del Jurupari votato alla sua missione benefica con tanto eroismo che ricorda la rinuncia del Bodhisattva e il sacrificio dell'Uomo-Dio, o quella sudanese della „Strega' tristo genio del male, dell'intrigo e della perfidia, o quella melanesiana del vecchio abbandonato sopra uno scoglio in mezzo al mare, che implora le stelle ad una ad una quando spuntano su l'orizzonte. Tanta è l'umanità di questi racconti: vivide gemme di un tesoro nascosto, fiori stellanti di un giardino incantato venati di uno strano colore, il colore del tempo" 23).

Fu così concepita, pianificata e avviata alla realizzazione la serie di "Miti e Leggende". Ma questa volta non si trattava soltanto di dirigere una collezione che integrasse le altre nel porre i documenti mitologici non scritti accanto alle sacre scritture delle religioni superiori; questa volta non c'erano i filologi a cui ricorrere, né c'era una filologia; c'era invece un immenso materiale sparso in riviste e in libri specializzati, di diffusione ristretta e proveniente da vari paesi e da varie correnti di studio: doveva essere raccolto, scelto, tradotto, commentato e presentato al lettore italiano nella forma più accessibile. Soltanto lui, Pettazzoni, era in grado di compiere le immane fatiche.

Egli si accinse all'impresa portandovi tutta intera la sua personalità di studioso, e non come ad un lavoro marginale nei confronti della attività più propriamente scientifica. Donde deriva la cospicua personalità che impronta quell'opera, d'un genere, di per sé, impersonale quante altre mai. Personalità nella scelta: egli doveva guidare il lettore per vie

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23. *Miti e Leggende* cit., p. V sg.

inconsuete e non servire i gusti di un pubblico di vari interessi e di varia preparazione. Personalità nella traduzione: egli oltre a tradurre gran parte dei testi, si avvale di illustri collaboratori (Mario Praz, Delio Cantimori, Volfango Giusti, ecc.) ai quali tuttavia chiese la libertà di „adeguare i rispettivi contributi ad un rendimento uniforme”, ottenendo così una apprezzabile unità stilistica, pur nello studio di conservare — e a volte forse ricostruire — la originarietà formale dei racconti della più disparata provenienza. Personalità nel commento: egli non voleva certo presentare i miti astraendoli dal loro ambiente come prodotti letterari validi di per sé, né intendeva, d'altra parte, integrarli con un apparato erudito che nulla d'essenziale aggiungesse ai fini di una migliore intelligenza; egli cercava invece di inquadrarli storicamente con costrutti significativi, e naturalmente soggettivi — e dunque personali —, fondati su un difficile aggiornamento equilibrato negli studi specializzati delle varie scuole e correnti etnologiche alle quali si doveva la ricerca originale (il substrato è fornito dalle classificazioni della scuola storico-culturale; ma la lunga polemica che pose Pettazzoni proprio contro certe tesi di questa scuola — l'*Urmonotheismus* di p. W. Schmidt — è la migliore garanzia della indipendenza e della originalità del suo giudizio) <sup>24</sup>).

Nella edificazione della storia delle religioni in Italia non poteva mancare un periodico. Sensibile a tale necessità, Pettazzoni, appena insediato alla cattedra universitaria romana si adoperò per dare all'Istituto di studi storico-religiosi una propria pubblicazione periodica: nacquero così gli „Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni” nell'anno 1925.

La rivista non si presentò con un manifesto programmatico o indirizzo editoriale o messaggio più o meno clamoroso, ma semplicemente con un lungo articolo dello stesso Pettazzoni, intitolato *La grave „mora”, Studio su alcune forme e sopravvivenze della sacralità primitiva*. Ché non poteva dirsi programma la breve avvertenza — ripetuta ad ogni numero in seconda pagina di copertina, immediatamente sopra il sommario — con la quale si spiegava all'eventuale lettore ignaro che

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24) Nella serie dei *Miti e Leggende*, editi dalla UTET di Torino, comparvero: nel 1948 il vol. I, *Africa-Australia*; nel 1953 il vol. III, *America settentrionale*; nel 1959 il vol. IV, *America Centrale e Meridionale*, che fu portato a termine con la collaborazione di T. Tentori. Il vol. II, dedicato ai miti oceaniani, che non seguì immediatamente il vol. I, sarà quanto prima pubblicato a cura di V. Lanternari che, elaborando ed integrando il materiale raccolto da Pettazzoni, si è assunto il difficile e doveroso compito di continuare l'opera dello Scomparso.



„gli *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni* perseguono nel loro campo speciale i fini della scienza e della cultura. Alla scienza contribuiscono facendo oggetto di storia la religione nel suo svolgimento. Alla cultura schiudono più larghi orizzonti, promovendo una maggiore partecipazione del pensiero italiano alla conoscenza di forme e momenti di civiltà meno prossimi e meno noti”. Eppure un programma, il programma più immediato, emergeva da una sapiente connessione tra l'avvertenza e il contenuto del primo articolo; quest'ultimo, in effetti, voleva soprattutto mostrare praticamente, meglio di un qualsiasi discorso teorico, come si potessero schiudere alla cultura italiana i „più larghi orizzonti” promessi dall'avvertenza. Il dialogo con gli Italiani prese l'avvio felice da Dante, il poeta nazionale: parlare di Dante voleva dire rivolgersi al pubblico più numeroso e attento che si potesse avere in Italia. Lo spunto fu dato da quel passo del *Purgatorio* (3, 103-145) che rievoca la morte di Manfredi, il figlio di Federico II, scomunicato, perseguitato con le armi da Carlo d'Angiò, e caduto in battaglia a Benevento; il suo corpo sommerso prima da un cumulo di pietre gettate da ciascun soldato dell'esercito vincitore, fu poi esumato perchè ne fossero dispersi i resti come si conveniva a chi era stato colpito dalla scomunica. Pettazzoni guidò i dantisti in una esegesi fondata sulla comparazione storico-religiosa, parlò loro della tradizione lapidaria nelle religioni, parlò loro del valore sacrale dei cumuli di pietre, e infine diene una ragione del suo studio nella dimostrazione della possibilità di scoprire da un episodio letterario, quale quello del Manfredi dantesco, „elementi più reconditi e tutta una più vasta zona di rapporti più arcaici nel tempo e più remoti nello spazio”. „Tanto vero è”, soggiungeva, „che, allo stato attuale della scienza, anche lo studio di Dante può essere fruttuosamente condotto sui piani dell'indagine storico-culturale”<sup>25</sup>).

In realtà quegli „Studi e Materiali” che iniziarono la loro vita con un discorso ai dantisti, volevano parlare non solo agli Italiani ma al mondo intero, giacché a quell'epoca ben poche — forse due o tre — erano le riviste in campo internazionale dedicate esclusivamente alla storia delle religioni. Questa stessa scarsità sta a dimostrare quanto difficile fosse far vivere una rivista di stretta osservanza scientifica destinata non a servire un pubblico già orientato verso la materia trattata, ma proprio a formare dal niente, o quasi, un simile pubblico di

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25) SMSR I (1925), p. 65.

lettori. Quando col volume 24-25 Pettazzoni lasciò la direzione degli „Studi e Materiali” per assumere quella di „Numen”, così gli piacque rievocare i difficili inizi:

„Le prime accoglienze non furono molto lusinghiere. Ricordo che una delle poche riviste che a quel tempo si occupavano in Italia di studi religiosi (*Bilychnis*) pronosticò alla neonata consorella effimera vita e prossima fine. Fatto è che, mancata ogni collaborazione in seno alla nuova Scuola di studi storico-religiosi io mi trovai solo a mandare avanti la pubblicazione pur conservandole il suo carattere impersonale. E spesso in quegli anni mi venne fatto di chiedermi se non ero stato imprudente ad avventurarmi in una impresa tanto impegnativa, e se valeva la pena di continuare. La Rivista fece così poco rumore che nessuno, quasi, se ne accorse; e gli abbonati avrebbero potuto essere contati senza fatica da qualcuno di quei selvaggi pei quali la serie naturale dei numeri non va oltre il computo delle dita delle mani, o — tutt'al più — anche dei piedi... Vennero tempi migliori. Moralmente mi fu conforto la simpatia dimostrata da studiosi stranieri, nei Paesi dove la Storia delle religioni è più coltivata; e la simpatia si tradusse sovente nella forma concreta della collaborazione, talora sollecitata, di solito offerta spontaneamente, in uno spirito di solidarietà che anticipò *in nuce* le grandi imprese scientifiche a cooperazione internazionale dei giorni nostri. La mia fatica non era stata del tutto vana se era valsa a richiamare l'attenzione su gli studi italiani...” 26).

Il bilancio dopo trenta anni di pubblicazioni fu senza dubbio attivo: gli „Studi e Materiali” sotto la guida di Pettazzoni avevano raggiunto un alto livello di autorità e di prestigio in campo internazionale. Tanto che la rivista non poteva cessare le pubblicazioni dopo il congedo del suo fondatore; c'era una tradizione da tutelare e da svolgere; e c'era ormai una scuola italiana di storia delle religioni che avrebbe potuto e dovuto accollarsi il non facile compito.

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Pettazzoni aveva esordito nella storia delle religioni con una memoria del 1909 sui Kabiri 27). Egli veniva alla storia delle religioni dalla filologia classica ed era naturale che prendesse l'avvio dalle religioni del

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26) SMSR 24-25 (1953-1954), p. V sg.

27) *Le origini dei Kabiri nelle isole del Mar Tracio*, „Memorie dell'Accademia dei Lincei, Classe sc. morali” Serie V, vol. 12 (1906-1908), pp. 635-740.

mondo classico. Tuttavia l'impulso ad uscire dalle strettoie del filologismo lo orientava ad un interessamento particolare per formazioni religiose marginali al campo dominato dai classicisti: tale gli appariva il culto kabirico rispetto alla religione greca, e tali erano le religioni degli Etruschi e, più ancora, dei Sardi, rispetto alla religione romana, le quali furono anche esse oggetto dei primi saggi di Pettazzoni <sup>28</sup>). Egli compì un passo importante verso una problematica più propriamente storico-religiosa e l'adozione del metodo comparativo che ne è alla base, con l'instaurazione di un fecondo parallelismo sardo-africano <sup>29</sup>). E nel 1911, due anni dopo la memoria sui Kabiri, con il saggio su *Un rombo australiano*, si avviò decisamente alla volta del mondo religioso studiato dall'etnologia <sup>30</sup>); senza la conoscenza di questo mondo era impossibile impostare la comparazione storico-religiosa, e dunque *tout-court* fare storia delle religioni così come la disciplina si veniva configurando nella sua mente <sup>31</sup>). Volgendo la ricerca sulle religioni dei primitivi, veniva già da quegli anni raccogliendo il materiale per lo studio comparato dell'idea di Dio <sup>32</sup>), che sarà fondamentale nella sua ulteriore opera.

I due libri, rispettivamente sullo zoroastrismo e sulla religione greca <sup>33</sup>), che uscirono nel breve spazio degli anni 1920 e 1921, rispo-

28) Zerona: *contributo alla questione degli Etruschi*, „Rendiconti dell'Accademia dei Lincei, Classe sc. morali”, S. V, vol. 17 (1908), pp. 652-666; *Rapporti fra l'Etruria e la civiltà di Golasecca*, „Römische Mitt. Arch. Inst.” vol. 24 (1909), pp. 317-335; *Le antichità protosarde di Santa Vittoria*, „Bull. Paletnol. Ital.” 35 (1909), pp. 317-335; ecc. E si deve tener conto anche dell'attenzione rivolta alle civiltà antiche confinanti col mondo classico, quali l'egiziana (*Il tipo di Hator*, „Ausonia” 4 (1909) pp. 181-218) e l'iranica (*Gli Amesaspenta e gli Adityas*, „Studi ital. di filologia indo-iran.” 7 (1909), pp. 3-14).

29) *Paletnologia sardo-africana*, „Rev. d'Ethnogr. et Soc.” 1 (1910), pp. 219-232; *Ordalia sarda e ordalie africane*, „Riv. ital. di sociol.” 15 (1911), pp. 36-45. I suoi studi sulla religione degli antichi sardi si conclusero con il volume *La religione primitiva in Sardegna*, Piacenza 1912, che grazie a tali impostazioni novatrici fu riguardato come uno di quelli che „danno una scossa alla scienza” (DEUBNER in „Archiv f. Religionswiss.” 1920, p. 191).

30) Ricordiamo, al riguardo, che la sua competenza e i suoi interessi nel campo dell'etnologia lo avevano condotto alla carica di ispettore al Museo preistorico ed etnografico di Roma, che egli rivestì dal 1909.

31) Il suo primo articolo metodologico è del 1913: *La scienza delle religioni e il suo metodo*, „Scientia” 7 (1913), pp. 239-247. Qui egli considerava quale metodo integrale della storia delle religioni, quello della nascente scuola storico-culturale.

32) Negli „Atti della Società Italiana per il Progresso delle Scienze”, Roma 1914, compare il suo primo articolo sull'argomento: *Le origini dell'idea di Dio*.

33) *La religione di Zarathustra nella storia religiosa dell'Iran*, Bologna 1920, e *La religione nella Grecia antica fino ad Alessandro*, Bologna 1921.

sero soprattutto alle esigenze informative della collana „Storia delle Religioni”, e, si può dire, costituiscono quasi una parentesi nel quadro dell’attività di Pettazzoni. Intendiamoci, non manca ad essi una giustificazione metologica che li sottragga alla mera contingenza: con essi, e in specie col secondo, egli si rese conto di aver tentato, nella linea dell’esegesi storicistica tradizionale, un esperimento di storia religiosa integrata, ossia calata nella storia politica, sociale, economica, artistica, ecc. di un singolo popolo, mediante una connessione continua e coerente il più possibile degli aspetti distinti eppure solidali di una medesima civiltà. Ma ciò non era ancora „storia delle religioni”, o almeno non lo era nel senso con cui egli stesso intendeva che la storia delle religioni fosse fatta. E quando, a distanza di 32 anni, fu indotto a licenziare una seconda edizione della *Religione nella Grecia Antica* <sup>34)</sup>, la sua più importante preoccupazione non fu certo quella di un aggiornamento bibliografico, bensì di ricondurre quel lavoro ‚estragante’ nell’ambito di una reale problematica storico-religiosa. E’ quanto ottenne senza modificare minimamente il testo, ma solo premettendo una significativa introduzione <sup>35)</sup>. Se l’opera nella sua prima edizione descriveva e penetrava dal punto di vista della religione „gli splendori della civiltà greca” intendendoli come un irripetibile prodigio, ora nella introduzione alla seconda edizione si additava nel prodigio un prodotto storico e si avvertiva che „la civiltà greca deve cessare di essere un miracolo per aprirsi all’intendimento storico”. E così anche l’incomparabile religione greca fu comparata: poteva e doveva diventare anche essa oggetto dello studio comparativo che solo può fornire gli elementi per una „storia anteriore al documento”. Il miracolo greco trova le non miracolistiche premesse nell’incontro di „una civiltà ‚mediterranea’ presente *in situ*, e una sopravvenuta civiltà ‚indoeuropea’ ”; e questo processo storico viene riguardato nello schema tipico ricorrente dell’incontro-urto di popolazioni di agricoltori sedentari con popoli nomadi-pastori condotti all’invasione armata dalle loro stesse strutture civili. E proprio dalla comparazione, proprio dall’inserimento in uno schema tipico, che fa meno prodigioso il „miracolo” greco collegandolo ad una recuperabile preistoria, ecco che appare la genuina forma della religione greca, o, in genere, della greicità; appare quanto realmente incomparabile, realmente unico e irripetibile sia stato

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34) Torino, 1953.

35) La materia dell’introduzione è contenuta nell’articolo *Les deux sources de la religion grecque*, „Mnemosyne”, S. IV, 4 (1951), pp. 1-8.

creato dai Greci, determinando una decisiva svolta nella storia della civiltà, o, se vogliamo, gettando le basi della civiltà occidentale.

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Nel 1924 uscì per la collezione „Storia delle Religioni” il suo libro sui misteri <sup>36)</sup>. Forse era stato concepito come i due libri, su Zaratustra e sulla religione greca, che lo avevano preceduto in quella serie; forse doveva consistere, rispondendo a certe esigenze della collezione, in una trattazione più completa possibile dei vari misteri dell'antichità riguardanti separatamente nel quadro delle rispettive civiltà d'origine, secondo i canoni dello storicismo tradizionale per cui si riconosceva la possibilità di fare della storia soltanto nell'ambito di una singola civiltà. Sta di fatto che i capitoli centrali del libro (II-VI) presentano effettivamente i misteri nel loro svolgimento particolare in seno alle religioni greca, tracia, frigia, egiziana, babilonese, fenicia e persiana, come momenti di altrettante storie nazionali. Appaiono giustapposti (diremmo quasi con rigore), o appena collegati dove le rispettive storie nazionali comportano la connessione, nelle fasi più o meno originarie (greci e traci, mesopotamici e fenici, ecc.) e nella fase ultima quando confluirono nel comune momento ellenistico-romano. Però, come *La religione nella Grecia antica* fu riscattata in seconda edizione alla storia delle religioni mediante l'introduzione di cui si è detto sopra, così le singole monografie sui misteri raccolte in questo libro vengono portate su di un piano di ricerca decisamente storico-religioso grazie alla breve prefazione, al lungo primo capitolo sul rombo nell'etnologia nel folklore e nell'archeologia, e alla sintesi comparativistica che alla fine svolge sommariamente una originale teoria dei misteri. In altre parole, con questo libro Pettazzoni presentò le „religioni” (così si diceva allora) misteriche nel modo più corretto che si potesse esigere da parte della tradizione storico-filologica, e quindi ruppe clamorosamente la tradizione stessa ponendo questioni (squisitamente storiche, si badi bene, e non fenomenologiche) la cui soluzione non poteva essere demandata che al comparativismo storico-religioso.

Certo è che l'idea di cominciare il libro con un determinante capitolo sul rombo rispose appieno alla necessità, che egli sentiva impellente, di scuotere la scienza tradizionale, la quale si gingillava sulla teoria

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<sup>36)</sup> *I Misteri. Saggio di una teoria storico-religiosa*, Bologna 1924.

delle origini egiziane dei culti misterici con le relative polemiche, sul contenuto sapienziale dei misteri, sulla loro presunta religiosità moderna che avrebbe preparato la via (se non addirittura dato origine) al Cristianesimo, e via dicendo... L'uso sacrale del rombo presso gli australiani e la sua presenza nel rituale di misteri ellenistici, rendeva quanto mai cospicua l'esigenza di una comparazione tra iniziazioni tribali primitive e iniziazioni misteriche.

La comparazione non fu svolta (ché il carattere dell'opera non pretendeva tanto) su una scala sufficientemente larga, sì che l'Autore potesse precisare l'essenza e la funzione delle iniziazioni tribali — del resto manca ancor oggi uno studio definitivo al riguardo, ed egli allora si giovava soprattutto delle ricerche del Webster sulle società segrete dei primitivi —, e infine giungere a rilevare le peculiarità dei misteri che affondano le loro radici in quella preistoria istituzione. Egli non mancò tuttavia di riscontrare ed additare alla futura ricerca le caratteristiche del „rito di introduzione nella società dei maschi adulti”, ossia di quel momento che per i giovani della tribù è „quasi il principio di un'altra vita”, come egli si esprimeva sottolineando significativamente la frase quasi per una larvata allusione al contenuto escatologico e soteriologico dei misteri (pag. 4). Così, accanto al prodigioso rombo, emerge una serie di elementi, di vario valore, ma tutti ricorrenti e concorrenti alla formulazione di uno schema fenomenologico: tatuaggi, travestimenti animaleschi, digiuni e astinenze, azioni drammatiche, naturalismo sessuale e ideologia di „morte e rinascita”, che Pettazzoni intende come una religiosità di carattere ctonio e vegetativo.

A questa fenomenologia che egli definisce statica, affianca poi una fenomenologia dinamica, ossia concernente le concordanze dei singoli svolgimenti, impostata sul rapporto del filone „iniziatico-misterico” con gli sviluppi di un altro tipo religioso: quello delle religioni civiche o nazionali. Il rapporto gli appare sostanzialmente espresso dalla antitesi corrente tra i termini di individuo e di stato. „Di fronte ad una religiosità dello stato... orientata verso... la conservazione e l'incremento di quell'organismo sociale e politico cui l'individuo appartiene nascendo [cioè, *senza iniziazione*: peccato che questo punto sia stato soltanto sfiorato!], ...la religiosità dei misteri ha piuttosto carattere privato e individuale, orientata come è verso il destino di ogni singolo uomo nell'al di là” (pag. 287 sg.). Nella dialettica individuo-stato i misteri sono così qualificati per un loro ultranazionalismo tendenziale, che si fece

attuale quando particolari vicende storiche lo permisero (dissolvimento degli stati nazionali). Ma da che derivava loro la carica „antistatale” che li poneva come in alternativa alle religioni nazionali? Dal fatto, spiega Pettazzoni, che essi affondano le loro radici in istituzioni anteriori alla formazione degli stati nazionali.

A questo punto, dopo l'impostazione fenomenologica che accertava i rapporti formali tra iniziazioni primitive e misteri, si poneva la questione più propriamente storica dei rapporti genetici tra le une e gli altri. Il problema, secondo la metodologia corrente, era espresso dall'alternativa fra monogenesi e poligenesi, o, in altri termini, fra diffusione e convergenza. Ma la particolarità e la concretezza dei fatti che si presentavano al suo giudizio, gli davano la facoltà di sfuggire alla generica e astratta alternativa. Per lui tanto il concetto di diffusione (Ratzel) quanto quello di convergenza casuale (Ehrenreich) o necessaria (Bastian), non erano che astrazioni, e dunque non dovevano essere applicati sistematicamente come soluzioni belle e pronte, ma tutt'al più potevano fornire ipotesi di lavoro da vagliare di volta in volta su ogni singolo caso. Di qui discende la libertà e l'originalità del suo costrutto improntato al metodo storico e non già a suggestioni e formulazioni d'ordine speculativo. La storia dei misteri gli si delineò come „una moltitudine di linee parallele che partono da un piano comune di base e giungono a diverse altezze, alcune cortissime — rappresentative di sviluppi parziali, rudimentali e quasi atrofici, quali hanno luogo presso i popoli incolti (società iniziatiche dei „selvaggi”, figure di un salvatore, un „Heilbringer”, nelle mitologie inferiori, embrionali azioni drammatiche di carattere liturgico-sacrale) —, altre alquanto più lunghe (per esempio il druidismo: p. 298 sgg.), altre ancora di più (elementi di religiosità agraria presso i Semiti: p. 311 sgg.), e solo poche lunghissime e sovrastanti; le quali poi a un certo momento, quale prima e quale dopo, deviano tutte più o meno dalla loro primitiva direzione parallela e convergono in un punto d'incontro, che corrisponde alla loro concentrazione ellenistica” (p. XIV sg.).

Nel risalire al „piano comune di base”, gli si prospetta un momento particolarmente significativo, quasi un *terminus ante quem*: l'invenzione e la diffusione dell'agricoltura. Ciò in quanto egli concepiva l'origine dei misteri esclusivamente in funzione di una primitiva religiosità agraria. Questa visione unilaterale, in effetti, costituì un grave e indiscutibile limite alla sua ricerca; ma non dimentichiamo, d'altra parte, che si

tratta di un lavoro di circa quaranta anni fa, e tutto quel che gli studi storico-religiosi di allora offrivano con la garanzia di una poderosa documentazione, erano le teorie di Mannhardt e di Frazer sui culti agrari e gli spiriti-dei della fertilità. Ma neppure questo limite gli impedisce di risalire oltre la „civiltà di tipo agricolo, a sedi stabili, e con tutti gli elementi connessi di ordine economico, sociale e politico, oltre che avrebbero poi conservato l'impronta di una simile esperienza. Il relativo, quasi una tappa comune di alcune particolari linee di sviluppo che avrebbero poi conservato l'impronta di una simile esperienza. Il termine assoluto, invece, doveva essere rinvenuto molto più in là se „non pochi selvaggi attuali ignari dell'agricoltura — valgano per tutti gli Australiani — praticano tuttavia dei riti di iniziazione che hanno non pochi punti di contatto coi misteri, sia nel carattere generale esoterico ed iniziatico sia nella particolare morfologia” (pag. 293). Ciò non lo porta, comunque, a rinunciare alla „religiosità agraria”, bensì soltanto a rinvenire i suoi presupposti in una anteriore civiltà interessata già alle vicende della vegetazione spontanea, e che su tali vicende costruiva le proprie ideologie sociali e religiose. In essa vedeva il „piano di base” dal quale si dipartono come tante parallele le linee di sviluppo, alla fine di alcune delle quali, un numero ristrettissimo, si trovano i misteri.

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L'attività scientifica di Pettazzoni dal 1926 al 1936 è caratterizzata dalle ricerche sulla confessione dei peccati. Una ventina di articoli, in maggior parte comparsi negli SMSR, e i tre noti volumi <sup>37)</sup> del 1929, del 1935 e del 1936, sono il frutto di quelle ricerche. Un giudizio obiettivo su questa parte della sua opera non mancherebbe di rilevare come essa risenta in una certa misura del comparativismo evoluzionistico, sia nell'ispirazione, sia nella trattazione, e sia anche in alcune conclusioni positivistiche; ma al tempo stesso dovrebbe rendere atto che qualcosa si muove in quelle pagine, che continuamente, ora solo nelle intenzioni ed ora anche nei risultati, ora espressamente ed ora tra le righe, emergono esigenze d'ordine storico, che, insomma, si stavano ponendo le basi per il comparativismo storico.

<sup>37)</sup> *La confessione dei peccati, I: Primitivi, America antica, Giappone, Cina, Brahmanesimo, Giainismo, Buddismo*, Bologna 1920; *II: Egitto, Babilonia, Israele, Arabia meridionale*, Bologna 1935; *III: Siria, Hittiti, Asia Minore, Grecia*, Bologna 1936.



Sarebbe interessante conoscere i motivi di scelta dell'oggetto di una così lunga e impegnativa ricerca. Forse non ci allontaneremo molto dalla verità cercandoli in un suo atteggiamento di fronte a due scoperte, da lui stesso definite sorprendenti, che si trovò a fare nella letteratura etnologica quando gli „venne l'idea di studiare la confessione dei peccati all'infuori della religione cristiana": „la confessione dei peccati è praticata da un grandissimo numero di popolazioni primitive"; „presso i primitivi il peccato che è oggetto di confessione è prevalentemente o quasi esclusivamente il peccato sessuale" <sup>38</sup>). In effetti potrebbero essere queste due scoperte iniziali le cause concomitanti che lo avrebbero condotto all'impresa con una prospettiva, diremo quasi evolucionistica, di stabilire lo sviluppo del concetto di peccato, e con una prospettiva più propriamente storicistica — del resto, l'unica dichiarata — di seguire attraverso il tempo e lo spazio una pratica religiosa, la cui presenza a livelli così diversi doveva, se non negata dai fatti, porre un problema squisitamente storico, indipendentemente dalla possibilità di reali soluzioni. „La confessione dei peccati non è una specialità della religione cristiana" <sup>39</sup>): questo era in fondo il punto di partenza e con questa constatazione egli stesso giustificava la sua ricerca. L'indagine sulla confessione dei peccati, in definitiva, dovette sembrargli un'ottima occasione per vagliare l'universalità e la conseguente autonomia degli studi storico-religiosi, nonché le possibilità del metodo comparativo che tale universalità sottintendeva.

Fu un lavoro imponente: tanto per dare un'idea con le cifre, ricorderemo che soltanto nel campo dell'etnologia, muovendo da una mezza dozzina di casi già studiati (naturalmente dal Frazer), allargò l'orizzonte relativo sino a comprendere un centinaio di popoli primitivi in un'indagine estesa a tutti i continenti. Nello studio del materiale si pose problemi d'ordine critico, morfologico e interpretativo. La valutazione critica dei fatti raccolti, intesa principalmente ad appurare la loro originarietà, lo portò a rilevare interessanti casi di sincretismo religioso dove (per es. nel Perù incaico, presso gli Algonkini, nel Guatemala, ecc.) la confessione cattolica si era inserita in pratiche confessionali indigene. Sempre nell'ambito della critica storica cercò di ricostruire uno sviluppo della pratica confessionale ogniquale volta gli elementi

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<sup>38</sup>) *Saggi di storia delle religioni e di mitologia*, Roma 1946, p. 103.

<sup>39</sup>) *La confessione dei peccati: metodo e risultati* in „Scientia" 31 (1937) p. 1: con tale periodo introduce alla problematica della sua ricerca.

acquisiti sembravano permetterglielo (Messico, Perù, Egitto antico, Israele, Buddhismo). Quanto alla morfologia, stabilì una classificazione basata su due termini di confronto: la concomitanza di altri riti con la confessione (abluzione, bagno, aspersione, asportazione, lancio o dispersione, combustione, fumigazione, scarificazione, sputo, vomito), e la qualità del peccato oggetto della pratica confessionale. Questi rilievi tipologici gli fornirono le basi per due notazioni d'ordine interpretativo: 1) tutte le pratiche concorrenti con la confessione sono di carattere eliminatorio, e 2) il peccato più generalmente confessato è il peccato sessuale.

La sintesi storico-interpretativa, in realtà, rimase affidata a vari scritti che seguirono la pubblicazione dei tre volumi sulla confessione dei peccati. Quest'opera, infatti, doveva essere completata, oltre che dallo studio della pratica confessionale in alcune religioni superiori, o, come egli diceva „moderne”<sup>40)</sup>, tra le quali il Cristianesimo, da una conclusione che tracciasse „lo svolgimento storico della confessione nel quadro generale dello svolgimento religioso e culturale dell'umanità”<sup>41)</sup>. Ad ogni modo i risultati della ricerca enunciati dallo stesso Pettazzoni, alcuni in forma definitiva ed altri come ipotesi provvisorie, sono noti. La confessione dei peccati gli parve un rito catartico, sostanzialmente affine alle pratiche eliminatorie che lo accompagnano di solito. L'eliminazione del peccato è ottenuta dalla sua evocazione orale, intesa per la fase originaria come operazione magica (la magia della parola). Né vedeva soluzione di continuità tra l'operazione magica primitiva e il rito confessionale delle religioni superiori, attribuendo all'una e all'altro la elementare funzione liberatrice: liberazione dal miasma connesso col peccato prima, e liberazione dal rimorso del peccato (o dalla condizione di peccatore nei riguardi di un dio, o di Dio) poi. Lo scopo evocativo della enunciazione del peccato è peraltro sempre ben rilevato dalla impossibilità di alternarlo con una funzione informativa: in una religione superiore come il Cristianesimo, ma anche presso i primitivi

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40) „Questo termine va inteso in senso tipologico, anziché cronologico. In questo senso il Cristianesimo è una religione „moderna”, in quanto introduce un nuovo tipo di religione al posto del tipo antico rappresentato dal paganesimo. Analogamente il Buddhismo è una religione „moderna” di fronte al Brahmanesimo. Così pure il Zoroastrismo, di fronte a quel che si può chiamare il paganesimo iranico pre-zoroastrico, in quanto il concetto di paganesimo è anche esso suscettibile di una generalizzazione tipologica corrispettiva”: *Saggi di storia delle religioni* cit., p. 98.

41) *Saggi di storia delle religioni* cit., p. 99.

nei confronti dell'Essere supremo onnisciente, a che servirebbe informare di qualcosa Colui che sa tutto?

Quanto al problema propriamente storico circa le origini della pratica confessionale, egli sembrava orientato per la monogenesi, e giungeva cautamente a formulare l'ipotesi che „la confessione dei peccati sia geneticamente connessa con una società di tipo ‚matriarcale’ ”. Asseriva ciò fondandosi sul fatto che la confessione pareva principalmente praticata dalle donne ed era sovente connessa con il culto di una grande divinità femminile.

Più di un motivo ci indurrebbe a considerare la lunga e imponente ricerca sulla confessione dei peccati, niente altro che un „esercizio”, una prova, un esperimento, i cui risultati positivi non si manifestarono tanto in una migliorata conoscenza storica di quel particolare fatto religioso, quanto nell'affinamento del metodo per le ricerche che seguirono, grazie alla constatazione pratica, assidua e prolungata con una dedizione propriamente ascetica, delle difficoltà che si pongono all'indagine storico-religiosa, e della vasta problematica che ne deriva. Prima di tutto ricordiamo che col terzo volume la ricerca finì, e nonostante alcune promesse i suoi interessi scientifici si volsero ad altri argomenti. In secondo luogo constateremo che l'importanza delle conclusioni — sia pure provvisorie — non corrispose certamente allo sforzo impiegato. Così il rilievo di per sé importante che il peccato sessuale sia tra i primitivi il peccato per eccellenza si risolve nella spiegazione prettamente positivistica per cui l'atto sessuale è „fisiologicamente tale da generare un'impressione di contagio”, e al tempo stesso „è *naturalmente* debilitante”. Così la stessa tesi delle origini della pratica confessionale nello ambito dell'area culturale del matriarcato è tutt'altro che metodicamente, non diciamo fondata, ma neppure impostata: è solo confortata da un'affermazione in tal senso che il Graebner, da lui citato, aveva avanzato sin dal 1924; egli intendeva farne oggetto di uno studio successivo, ma in realtà la lasciò cadere. E così perfino la funzione catartica della confessione, il risultato, cioè più valido e a cui più teneva, non è in verità una conclusione, ma nel quadro di tutta l'opera appare piuttosto come una premessa, essendo stato enunciato sin dal 1926 a chiusura della sua indagine iniziale sulla confessione dei peccati presso i primitivi 42).

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42) *La confessione dei peccati presso popolazioni primitive dell'Africa e dell'America*, SMSR 2 (1926), pp. 75 sgg.

Ma, ripetiamo, in questa fase della sua attività egli soprattutto foggì il metodo di ricerca, e non è senza significato che in ogni suo discorso sul metodo, sino all'ultimo comparso in „Numen” (6, 1959, pp. 1-14) sentisse la necessità di riallacciare il suo dire a quella particolare esperienza che senza dubbio fu la lunga indagine sulla confessione dei peccati.

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Gli studi storico-religiosi della prima metà del nostro secolo potrebbero venir qualificati dal problema degli Esseri supremi. Con la scoperta degli Esseri supremi australiani, infatti, il Lang diede il primo colpo sostanziale alle costruzioni evoluzionistiche nel campo delle religioni, e quindi l'*Urmonotheismus* di p. Schmidt che a questa scoperta si innestava diede un particolare indirizzo alla scuola storico-culturale che subentrava all'evoluzionismo in etnologia. Al problema degli Esseri supremi Pettazzoni dedicò la maggior parte della sua attività scientifica; due importanti opere segnano le tappe della ricerca: *Dio* <sup>43)</sup> del 1922 (ma il volume era già quasi interamente pronto per essere pubblicato nel 1915: la prima guerra mondiale lo costrinse a differirne la pubblicazione) e *L'onniscienza di Dio* <sup>44)</sup> del 1955.

Il primo passo nell'affrontare la questione (o il motivo stesso della ricerca?) fu quello di togliere il problema di Dio alla speculazione e di farlo diventare storico-religioso da teologico che era. S'incominciò così a storicizzare il concetto di Dio con la essenziale constatazione che la nostra coscienza monoteistica è dovuta al Cristianesimo. „Al Cristianesimo come religione e non come filosofia (teologia). E di tutta, in genere, la speculazione filosofica moderna — cristiana e non cristiana — si può dire che essa approfondì bensì il concetto della unicità di Dio, ma non lo creò. Nemmeno lo creò la speculazione antica... Non dai Greci derivò il Cristianesimo il suo monoteismo ma da Israele. Non dall'intellettualismo speculativo; ma dalla religione. Ché nell'antico

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43) *Dio: formazione e sviluppo del monoteismo nella storia delle religioni*, I: *L'Essere celeste nelle credenze dei popoli primitivi*, Roma 1922.

44) *L'onniscienza di Dio*, Torino 1955. Questo libro è nato da una serie di lezioni tenute sull'argomento nell'ottobre del 1935 nella Università di Uppsala per invito della Fondazione Olaus Petri. Da esso è stata tratta una *editio minor*, *L'essere supremo nelle religioni primitive*, Torino 1957, che riassumendo l'opera maggiore si rivolge ad un più vasto pubblico per introdurlo a quella problematica.

credenze dei popoli primitivi, ma anche nel campo delle religioni superiori. Così, da un lato il preteso monoteismo primordiale, che avrebbe dovuto rappresentare da solo il primo e originario momento della religione Israele la speculazione fu nulla, la religione fu tutto..."<sup>45)</sup>. Si poteva andare più in là di Israele? „Qui tocchiamo gli estremi confini della conoscenza storica diretta. Al di là si apre il campo dell'illazione, in quanto al caso specifico di Israele sia applicabile una verità d'ordine generale risultante dall'osservazione di una quantità — la maggiore possibile — di fatti accertati e concordanti: che è quanto dire, nel nostro ordine di studi, una verità conseguita col metodo etnologico"<sup>46)</sup>. In altre parole: la ricerca storica non doveva arrestarsi alla documentazione diretta ma poteva, anzi doveva, andar oltre piegando ai suoi fini il metodo comparativo usato dall'etnologia.

Il comparativismo — il metodo etnologico — che fino allora aveva fornito una sola risposta alla questione degli antecedenti del monoteismo, trovandoli nel politeismo-polidemonismo derivato a sua volta dall'animismo, secondo la classica formulazione tyloriana, adesso ne presentava un'altra, del tutto opposta alla prima, facendo della credenza primitiva negli Esseri supremi un rudimentale monoteismo preanimistico, che avrebbe costituito la prima forma di religione dalla quale si sarebbe giunti per linea diretta ai monoteismi storici. Pettazzoni si chiedeva: „come potevano sul medesimo ordine di fatti — i fatti religiosi dei popoli primitivi — fondarsi e reggersi due teorie opposte e contraddittorie? Alla teoria del Lang non mancarono le critiche dei rappresentanti dell'antropologismo classico... Ma più che la polemica, forse, era utile l'indagine. E all'indagine s'imponeva un compito quasi preliminare. Esso consisteva nell'estendere il più che fosse possibile il campo delle osservazioni ad abbracciare il massimo numero di fatti...". „A questo lavoro di verifica", scrive Pettazzoni<sup>47)</sup>, „io mi accinsi dapprima sui materiali etnografici relativi alle credenze religiose dei popoli incolti. Ma mentre crescevano di numero in questo campo i fatti osservati, anche qualitativamente essi mi si presentavano in una luce nuova, che non era quella nella quale erano apparsi al Lang. E questo nuovo criterio di interpretazione mi risultò poi suscettibile di sempre più numerose verificazioni; non più soltanto nell'ordine delle

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45) *Dio* cit., pp. IX sg.

46) *Dio* cit., p. XII.

47) *Dio* cit., pp. XVI sgg.

credenze dei popoli primitivi, ma anche nel campo delle religioni superiori. Così, da un lato il preteso monoteismo primordiale, che avrebbe dovuto rappresentare da solo il primo e originario momento della religiosità umana, mi si ridusse alle proporzioni più modeste della credenza in un essere celeste, appercepito in una figura personale del cielo secondo i modi di quel pensiero mitico che presiede a tutte le forme della religiosità primitiva. Di tale credenza posso dire di aver trovato le tracce persistenti presso popoli „primitivi” attuali di tutte le parti del mondo.

„Daltro lato la stessa credenza mi apparve rintracciabile anche nelle religioni della maggior parte dei popoli dell’antichità come idea di un Dio vero e proprio, e per lo più precisamente di un Dio supremo, secondo il carattere generalmente politeistico delle religioni antiche (non senza riscontro, del resto, con le religioni politeistiche di taluni popoli attuali: *T’ien* dei Cinesi).

„Mi sembra altresì di poter affermare che questa universale credenza in un essere celeste ebbe poi anche una parte capitale nella formazione storica del vero e proprio monoteismo...”

„Così le mie idee si componevano in un disegno organico o teoria, intesa a chiarire i destini di quella figura divina che appariva comune alle credenze religiose di tutta — o quasi — l’umanità sotto la triplice forma di Essere celeste o di Iddio ottimo e massimo o di Iddio unico. Essa teoria doveva dunque dar ragione degli elementi che concorsero alla formazione del monoteismo e che presiedettero al suo sviluppo attraverso la storia universale delle religioni. E doveva essere svolta naturalmente in tre parti, in rapporto con quelle tre forme della figura divina, corrispondenti a tre forme fondamentali della religione, nonché a tre momenti dello sviluppo culturale dell’umanità. Perciò al primo volume, che tratta dell’*Essere celeste nelle credenze dei popoli primitivi*, seguirà un secondo su *Il Dio supremo nelle religioni politeistiche*, ed un terzo su *Il Dio unico nelle religioni monoteistiche*”.

Come è noto egli pubblicò soltanto la prima parte del trittico. Né 33 anni dopo era nelle sue intenzioni di portare a termine le altre due nella forma allora divisata. „Nel procedere dell’opera”, scrive Pettazzoni nella prefazione alla *Onniscienza di Dio* con cui chiuse nel 1955 quel ciclo di ricerche che aveva preso l’avvio con il libro del 1922, „oltre a rettificare qua e là alcune vedute particolari, fui portato a fermare l’attenzione sugli attributi della divinità e specialmente su quello dell’onniscienza, al quale dedicai, via facendo, alcuni studi occasionali: *Ahura*

*Mazda, the Knowing Lord* in „Indo-iranian Studies in honour of Dastur Darab Peshotan Sanjana”, Londra-Lipsia 1925; *L'omniscience de Dieu*, in „Actes du Ve Congrès International d'Histoire des Religions” (1929), Lund 1930; *Allwissende höchste Wesen bei primitivsten Völkern*, in „Archiv für Religionswissenschaft” XXIX (1931)). Nel presente volume sono ripresi i motivi antichi e nuovi della ricerca, ma questa è definitivamente concentrata su l'attributo dell'onniscienza divina come complesso ideologico e come esperienza religiosa” (p. XI).

Ma torniamo al lavoro del 1922. Dopo aver descritto gli esseri supremi australiani, prima di procedere oltre, alla descrizione, cioè, degli esseri supremi di altre popolazioni, egli si sofferma a considerare il materiale raccolto e a trarne una prima conclusione: era infatti un materiale particolarmente importante per la storia degli studi storico-religiosi, non di per sé, ma perché proprio su di esso si fondava la scoperta del Lang, nonché la teoria dell'*Urmonotheismus* che da quella scoperta prendeva l'avvio. Che cosa aveva di „speciale” questo Essere supremo australiano che lo faceva tanto difficilmente interpretabile, almeno in confronto alle pur troppo facili interpretazioni di tanti altri „dèi” o „spiriti” o „esseri mitici” già noti nelle molte religioni studiate? Questo è il primo punto che Pettazzoni volle appurare, ponendosi subito in un nuovissimo atteggiamento critico tra tanto dommatismo speculativo che poco aveva a che fare con il metodo storico.

„La qualità d'autore della natura, ossia creatore, e insieme gli altri attributi elevatissimi che appaiono propri dell'Essere supremo — l'onnipotenza, l'immortalità, l'onniscienza, la moralità, — furono”, al giudizio di Pettazzoni, „l'ostacolo più forte a concepire la genesi dell'Essere supremo alla stregua delle altre figure della credenza religiosa: come era dunque unica la sua posizione di fronte agli dèi naturistici, così doveva essere altro e speciale il processo onde la sua figura era sorta nella coscienza dell'uomo”. Se non fosse stato per quei particolari attributi, le correnti teorie naturistiche non avrebbero esitato a definire un „dio del cielo” l'Essere supremo degli Australiani. E allora Pettazzoni dimostrò che anche quei particolari attributi potevano essere ricondotti alla sostanza uranica dell'Essere supremo, senza dover uscire dalla ermeneutica naturistica, e senza, soprattutto, dover ricorrere per quella peculiare creazione religiosa — ché tale doveva essere considerata spregiudicatamente se se ne voleva fare l'oggetto di uno studio storico — al pensiero razionale (anziché mitico) di cui sarebbe stato

un prodotto, se non addirittura alla rivelazione (la religione razionale „naturale” che, secondo l’antico filosofema cristiano tornato improvvisamente in auge, trova rispondenza nella religione „rivelata”). Intendiamoci, le interpretazioni naturalistiche potevano, e possono, non essere ritenute valide così per l’Essere supremo dei primitivi come per gli dèi delle religioni politeistiche, ma la validità della critica pettazzoniana, e l’originalità della sua posizione, consiste nell’essere rivolta a coloro i quali senza rigettare con un giudizio integrale il naturismo finché trattava gli *altri* „dèi”, favevano eccezione per questo solo „dio”, il quale da *Supreme Being*, come era stato chiamato dal Lang, si andava facendo sempre più un *Hochgott*. L’atteggiamento di Pettazzoni si fondava su elementari constatazioni di questo genere: se l’Essere supremo veniva ubicato nel cielo perché, come si diceva, questa sede appariva la più adatta per un „dio onnipotente” quale era stato concepito, il cielo stesso veniva sottoposto ad una interpretazione mitico-irrazionale che lo metteva in una connessione niente affatto obbiettiva (o „razionale”, o „naturale”) con l’idea di potenza; tanto valeva dunque assumere questa interpretazione come causa anziché della ubicazione dell’Essere supremo, della sua qualificazione come strapotente-onnipotente quando personificasse esso stesso il cielo. Conseguenza e non presupposto di questa „onnipotenza” diventa allora la creatività, così come effetto della pioggia che il cielo manda è la vegetazione (Baiaeme invia la pioggia e fa crescere l’erba, Daramulun è autore della pioggia e della vegetazione, ecc.). Il cielo potente e creatore è anche benevolo perché fornisce il cibo all’uomo, ma al tempo stesso è terribile nelle sue manifestazioni temporalesche, le quali però vengono interpretate come manifestazioni di collera per la cattiva condotta degli uomini: ed ecco la moralità dell’Essere supremo, una moralità relativa, ossia non oltrepassante l’ambito delle norme tribali. „Or il modo onde tale carattere morale si estrinseca è sommamente interessante e istruttivo: perché gli atti onde l’Essere supremo eseguisce le sue sanzioni etiche sono proprio altrettanti fenomeni meteorici” (p. 69). E tale funzione di giudice e vindice può egli esercitare in quanto sa tutto; ma questa onniscienza è in realtà una onnivegenza: l’Essere supremo vede tutto perché il cielo si stende su tutta la terra. Da cui deriva anche la sua ubiquità e la sua immanenza nello spazio, che trasferita al tempo può diventare eternità, intesa comme immortalità, l’immortalità delle cose „eterne” in confronto alla effimera vita dei mortali.



„A quale ordine di fatti del pensiero appartiene questo processo che pone e assegna dentro e accanto ad un elemento della natura una figura e persona operante in esso e di esso partecipe e presiedente ai fenomeni che in esso si svolgono?... *A quella forma dell'intuizione ch'è il mito*” (p. 71). E ancora una volta Pettazzoni pone lucidamente un'alternativa agli assertori della razionalità della concezione dell'Essere supremo, come destinata a soddisfare l'esigenza della causalità: o si respinge integralmente la possibilità di processi di personificazione e allora si dovrebbe respingere anche l'ipotesi che l'Essere supremo sia una causa fatta persona (ché tale è un Essere supremo concepito per trovare la causa delle cose), ovvero la si accetta e allora si deve accettare anche l'ipotesi che l'Essere supremo sia una personificazione del cielo.

Una volta respinte le varie pregiudiziali che potevano opporsi alla formulazione dell'uranicità dell'Essere supremo, Pettazzoni considerò le reali difficoltà che il processo mitico della personificazione celeste dovette incontrare nella sua attuazione (altro che spontaneità! e queste osservazioni riscattano senza dubbio la facilità dell'esegesi naturistica): si trattava di personificare, ossia di individuare il meno individuabile degli elementi naturali. Eppure (ecco il fatto storico e non psicologico) l'individuazione avvenne, per gradi, incompleta, in forme nuove e diverse, ma avvenne, e proprio per quelle difficoltà il prodotto fu eccezionale rispetto ai prodotti di personificazione di altri meglio individuabili elementi, quali il sole, la luna, le stelle, ecc. Qui il semplicismo o meccanicismo dell'esegesi in chiave naturistica, che indubbiamente risentiva dei tempi in cui quelle tesi venivano formulate, scomparire per dar luogo ad un approfondimento vivace e moderno, ricco di geniali notazioni e di spunti felici. Tale è il rilievo della posizione unica e straordinaria dell'Essere supremo, e tale è la sua qualificazione per tratti sintomatici: la mancanza di una religione imperniata sull'Essere supremo, la differenza tra le divinità delle religioni „teistiche” e questo presunto dio, e, infine, il suo congenito distacco dalle cose di questo mondo. Tutti motivi che guideranno poi l'indagine intesa a cercare „se anche fuori dell'Australia s'incontri la credenza nell'Essere supremo e quali forme essa presenti”, e ricompariranno nella sintesi finale corroborata dalla precedente formidabile documentazione.

La vasta ricerca mette in luce la varietà degli Esseri supremi oltre che il comune sottofondo uranico, la varietà dei modi della loro azione creatrice quando sono creatori, la varietà dei modi dell'onniscienza-

onniveggenza, e dell'esercizio dell'attività punitiva (nonché la varietà dei „peccati” punibili). Due preziose osservazioni soprattutto emergono per la loro importanza negli studi ulteriori. Una concerne il condizionamento della concezione degli Esseri supremi da parte dell' ambiente culturale in cui „le singole figure si formarono” (pp. 362 sg.): sin da allora egli fece luce sulla possibilità che Esseri celesti femminili siano sorti in una civiltà „matriarcale”, con la conseguente eventualità di attribuzione degli Esseri celesti maschili ad una civiltà „patriarcale”; ma non basta, ch  comincia ad apparire anche un Essere supremo delle civilt  di caccia, avente una „figura pi  o meno animalesca”, in altre parole comincia ad individuarsi nella congerie dei dati e nella altrui confusione concettuale, quel tipo particolare di Essere supremo che cesser  di essere considerato celeste per assumere il nome tecnico di Signore degli animali. La seconda osservazione concerne l'„oziosit ”, l'inattualit , la mancanza di culto di certi Esseri supremi che, dopo aver creato il mondo, si ritraggono da esso e non mantengono pi  alcun rapporto con gli uomini: un altro motivo, insomma, suscettibile di fecondi e impensati sviluppi (v. appresso, p. 37).

Lo studio critico di Pettazzoni demol  metodicamente la „religione degli Esseri supremi” come realt  storica, e con essa la concezione unitaria dell'Essere supremo. La variet  delle figure mitiche accolte sotto questa etichetta lo port  inevitabilmente alla provvisoria formulazione di una ipotesi poligenistica nei riguardi di tale concezione. E inoltre proprio la sua linea esegetica lo conduceva a considerare la permanenza di certi motivi caratteristici come semplici convergenze, spiegabili con la comune ispirazione uranica: e qui si toccano senza dubbio i limiti dell'ermeneutica naturistica. Eppure, anche questi limiti — certamente non tanto suoi quanto del suo tempo — Pettazzoni sin da allora cercava di superare quando alla uniformit  della esperienza del cielo, che costituiva il motivo fondamentale della sua ricerca comparativa, contrapponeva la variet  dei modi di personificazione, oltre che, naturalmente, gli svolgimenti storici connessi. Prima o poi — si prevede gi  da quelle pagine — sarebbe giunto alla considerazione di una particolare esperienza mitica del cielo, come prodotto storico di una particolare civilt , cos  da risolvere nella storicizzazione integrale anche quel certo meccanicismo naturistico d'origine. Intanto, Pettazzoni teneva a non essere confuso con altri teorici del naturismo che con i loro „solarismi”, „lunarismi”, ecc. proponevano la spiegazione assoluta della religione,

offrendo la chiave universale dell'esegesi religiosa. „Il mio ‚uranismo‘”, scriveva nel 1925, „se così si vuole chiamarlo, non vuole essere un sistema generale, ma una teoria particolare relativa ai soli esseri supremi”. E dunque, vista la particolare posizione degli Esseri supremi nelle varie formazioni religiose, una posizione eccezionale rispetto alle altre credenze, non era — né è oggi dopo un indubbio superamento del naturismo — da escludersi una eccezionalità anche nella loro giustificazione naturalistica o uranistica nel quadro dei molteplici processi ierogenetici. Ovvero: le figure mitiche o divine non sono certamente semplici personificazioni di fenomeni naturali, ma questi Esseri supremi mai completamente riducibili alle une o alle altre, quasi esempi di personificazione mancata (come Pettazzoni più volte rileva nell'osservarne le caratteristiche), possono proprio per questo denunciare una loro originaria „identificazione col cielo” che è un elemento della natura e non una „persona”, e, anzi, tanto poco individuabile da sfuggire anche alla sua definizione come elemento (del resto, ogni nozione del cielo che cerchi di andare oltre il suo significato spaziale, è sempre, dalle lontane origini ad oggi, una pura astrazione soggettiva). Ma a parte tutto ciò, è indicativo, allo scopo di giustificare il naturismo di Pettazzoni, il fatto che in quella stesse occasione abbia detto: „... con la qualifica di ‚uranismo’ la mia concezione degli esseri supremi resta definita in funzione della *materia*: meglio si definirebbe in funzione della *forma* come un ‚mitologismo’, o concezione mitologica”.

Trentatré anni dopo usciva *L'onniscienza di Dio*. L'indagine sullo sfuggente e multiforme Essere supremo si era ristretta ad uno dei suoi attributi, l'onniscienza, che doveva mostrarsi particolarmente significativo, tanto ad ogni modo da dare una dimensione storicamente accertabile all'Essere supremo celeste, e da toglierlo all'astrazione tipologica aperta a tutte le soluzioni, anche a quelle che con la storia avevano assai poco a che fare. L'onniscienza divina viene presa in considerazione come un complesso ideologico originale, un prodotto, un fatto storico. Di qui la nuova svolta, decisamente storicistica, data all'indagine. Ed era al contempo il colpo di grazia che veniva menato all'ideale Dio unico a cui i teorici dell'*Urmonotheismus* riferivano tutte e tutte insieme le attribuzioni degli Esseri supremi di varia natura e di varie funzioni documentati dall'etnologia. Tanto insufficiente doveva mostrarsi nella realtà una simile idea di Dio che un suo solo attributo, quale l'onniscienza, poteva diventare oggetto di un'indagine storica a sé, e rendere

finalmente verificabili le riserve teoriche alla costruzione schmidtiana.

L'onniscienza definita nei limiti di un'onniveggenza tendenzialmente volta a giudicare le azioni degli uomini e distinta dalla veggenza magico-oracolare con funzioni di diversa natura e portata, diventa il termine di paragone concreto (= storico) per individuare l'Essere celeste. Il quale, essendo il prodotto mitico di una particolare civiltà, mostra peculiarità inconfondibili nel corso dell'indagine, dove s'incontrano altri esseri supremi differentemente caratterizzati in quanto condizionati da differenti forme di civiltà. Scrive egli nella sintesi (pag. 648), sottolineando il passo: *L'idea primitiva dell'Essere supremo non è un assoluto a priori. Essa sorge nel pensiero umano dalle condizioni stesse dell'esistenza umana, e poiché le condizioni variano nelle diverse fasi e forme della civiltà primitiva, varia anche in seno a questa la forma dell'Essere supremo. L'Essere supremo, che in proiezione archetipica (mito delle origini) è il creatore che garantisce una volta per sempre la stabilità e la durata del mondo, nella vita reale di ogni giorno è quegli che provvede di volta in volta alle necessità esistenziali dell'uomo. Come nelle primitive civiltà agricole l'Essere supremo è la Terra Madre perché dalla terra proviene all'uomo il suo sostentamento, come nelle civiltà pastorali l'Essere supremo è il Padre celeste perché dal cielo viene la pioggia che fa nascere e crescere l'erba necessaria al pascolo degli armenti e quindi alla vita umana, così nella civiltà della caccia l'Essere supremo è il Signore degli Animali perché da lui dipende la cattura della selvaggina e l'esito della caccia, che ha per l'uomo un'importanza vitale.*

Una simile formulazione sintetica non vuole però essere una formula. E' sì un risultato acquisito, un punto fermo, ma non un invito a fermarsi; è invece una direttiva, una via maestra additata alla futura ricerca. Muovendo da tale base si pongono problemi nuovi: donde deriva a certe civiltà di caccia un Essere supremo celeste onniveggente in luogo di un prevedibile Signore degli animali? quale rapporto corre nella civiltà della caccia tra Signore degli animali e Essere supremo celeste, se essi sono effettivamente prodotti di due complessi ideologici sostanzialmente diversi? La risposta emerge da una ipotesi che egli, fondandosi sulla sua ricerca, crede di poter cautamente avanzare. Nello schema storico-culturale che polarizza i cacciatori in una civiltà di caccia-raccolta più primitiva e in una civiltà di caccia organizzata più progredita, egli inserisce il Signore degli animali ascrivendolo alla prima e

l'Essere supremo celeste ascrivendolo alla seconda. Certo non può pronunciarsi con sicurezza finché, come lui dice, non sia stato chiarito il rapporto storico concreto tra i due poli dello schema. E tuttavia nel materiale raccolto trova gli elementi — Signori degli animali messi in rapporto con il tempo meteorico e quindi con il cielo („Il maltempo come impedimento della caccia è un castigo del Signore degli animali avviato a diventare un Essere celeste”) — per immaginare una dipendenza genetica dell'Essere supremo celeste dal Signore degli animali.

Sappiamo come la formulazione di certe linee di sviluppo oggi possa far gridare all'evoluzionista, con la facilità di chi bada più alle etichette che al contenuto. E non riteniamo inutile pertanto rilevare che qui non è postulata una linea di sviluppo unica e costante, ripetuta nelle diverse parti del mondo in tempi diversi; qui, invece, si pongono semplicemente i termini di un problema concernente un determinato fatto storico, quello della comparsa dell'Essere supremo celeste in una civiltà circoscrivibile dall'indagine etnologica. Non si prospetta una soluzione chiave, ma si mantengono in tutta la loro validità, come punti da chiarire, però, e non come riserve teoriche, tutte le questioni in cui si articola il problema: è l'Essere supremo celeste che si stacca dal Signore degli animali autonomizzandosi o esaltandone certi aspetti? o è esso una concezione autonoma che si pone accanto al Signore degli animali, o l'assorbe, o, comunque, lo supera? eccetera, eccetera. „Tutto ciò potrà essere chiarito soltanto da ulteriori ricerche sul Signore degli animali”: ecco la lezione dello storico che non possiede evidentemente come tanti teorici le soluzioni da illustrare poi con una pseudo-ricerca.

Egli lo storico, anzi lo storico delle religioni, ha affrontato con padronanza, eppure con la modestia (non solo formale nella prefazione, ma sostanziale nell'opera) di chi sa arrestarsi di fronte a certi limiti, i più disparati campi di indagine, muovendo dal terreno proprio dell'etnologo a quello del classicista, dell'orientalista, dell'egittologo, del sinologo, dell'indologo, ecc.: ogni capitolo dell'*Onniscienza di Dio* è una monografia valida di per sé oltre che ai fini della tesi generale, e ogni monografia introduce nei vari campi speciali la problematica squisitamente storico-religiosa, offrendo agli specialisti non tanto soluzioni perfette quanto temi di ricerca per una integrazione scientifica, per un reale allargamento dei loro orizzonti.

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Val certo la pena di ricordare anche alcuni significativi articoli, elaborati nell'ambito della ricerca generale sugli Esseri supremi, e tuttavia non privi di una loro propria validità. Son quelli che concernono la formazione del monoteismo <sup>48</sup>), ossia quelli che, sia pure in sintesi, realizzano lo scopo ultimo della incompiuta trilogia, la quale aveva appunto per sottotitolo „Formazione e sviluppo del monoteismo”. Questo problema, infatti, diede l'avvio all'indagine sugli Esseri supremi dei primitivi: si trattava di intervenire con una ricerca improntata al rigore storico, nella polemica antievoluzionistica sulle origini del monoteismo. Egli cominciò col correggere l'impostazione del problema che era stato formulato e studiato non di per sé ma in rapporto alla „prima forma” della religione. E delineò una lucida morfologia del monoteismo desunta dalle religioni monoteistiche storiche, le quali gli apparvero fondate non tanto sulla credenza in un solo dio, quanto, invece, sulla proclamazione della unicità di quel Dio contro la credenza in una pluralità di dèi. Donde il rilievo dell'importanza di una predicazione profetica (o dei fondatori), e l'accertamento di una relazione di dipendenza genetica dei monoteismi da politeismi preesistenti, dai quali si sarebbero sviluppati non per una „naturale” evoluzione, ma per una „storica” rivoluzione. „Ogni avvento di una religione monoteistica è condizionato da una rivoluzione religiosa”, è la sintesi della sua qualificazione tipicamente storica del monoteismo. Ma non è una formula fenomenologica (sia pure di quella fenomenologia dinamica che egli volle distinguere da una fenomenologia statica), è invece la rilevazione di „un fatto contingente che si produsse pochissime volte nella storia del mondo”. Contingente e non necessario: contingente come ogni altro evento storico.

Non era dunque nella natura del politeismo la necessità di uno sviluppo in senso monoteistico, tutt'altro. Eppure proprio e soltanto l'ambiente politeistico poté offrire l'occasione all'avvento monoteistico. Ecco l'impostazione nuova del problema, che superava i limiti della polemica antievoluzionistica, ed ecco i brillanti risultati: l'idea della divinità è propria delle religioni politeistiche e se il dio monoteistico è categoricamente „divinità” (e non per es. un Essere supremo) ciò è dovuto alla

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48) *La formazione del monoteismo*, „Rev. de l'hist. de rel.” 88 (1923), pp. 193-299 (il rifacimento in *Saggi di storia delle religioni e di mitologia*, Roma 1946, pp. 3-28); *Monotheismus und Polytheismus*, „Die Rel. in Geschichte und Gegenwart” 4 (1930), pp. 185-191 (testo italiano in *Saggi cit.*, pp. 29-38); *La formation du monothéisme*, „Rev. de l'Université de Bruxelles” 1950 (trad. inglese in *Essays on the History of Religions*, Leiden 1954, pp. 1-10).

sua concezione sorta in ambiente politeistico; qui esso preesisteva ma non perfettamente integrato nei confronti degli altri dèi; tanto che in una „rivoluzione religiosa” poté essere assunto come l'unico dio in opposizione alla pluralità degli dèi, mediante il suo „perfezionamento” (era l'unico non integrato, e dunque suscettibile di perfezionamento) in senso monoteistico. Il dio non perfettamente integrato è — e questo è quanto può essere concesso ai teorici dell'*Urmonotheismus* — l'Essere supremo celeste dei primitivi; esso diventato un dio nelle varie formazioni politeistiche fu soggetto a diverse sorti: ora assunse il rango di una divinità suprema, il re del pantheon (era un Essere supremo), ed ora fu riguardato soprattutto come una figura mitica relegata al tempo delle origini (era un creatore), ora si definì in divinità uraniche più o meno plasticamente precisate — e perciò rimpicciolite — perdendo la sua tipica indeterminatezza originaria (era il cielo „impersonificabile”), ed ora, finalmente, la sua essenza non fu risolta in nessuno di questi modi, e la sua presenza, quasi quella di un estraneo, poteva in qualche modo contrapporsi al costrutto politeistico. Quest'ultimo fu il caso che diede materia alla rivoluzione religiosa antipoliteistica, attuata in nome di un Dio sentito sostanzialmente diverso dagli altri dèi. „Così la posizione evoluzionistica e l'antievoluzionistica sono superate: il monoteismo come formazione storica appartiene alle fasi più recenti, mentre per le sue origini risale alle fasi e alle forme iniziali della vita religiosa”<sup>49</sup>).

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La qualifica del monoteismo attraverso la ricostruzione delle origini e dello sviluppo è un chiaro esempio metodologico di come il pensiero storico possa penetrare un fenomeno religioso. E' il metodo pettazzoniano di porsi di fronte ad un fenomeno religioso, riconoscendolo sì come tale (ossia non etico, non speculativo, non artistico, ecc.), ma cercandone l'ultima spiegazione nella storia e con la storia, quale „fatto” e non come puro e semplice „dato”. „Per il pensiero storico ogni *phainomenon* è un *genomenon*”<sup>50</sup>), fu la sua felice formulazione del principio per cui soltanto mediante la storia si può risolvere integralmente il fenomeno religioso, essendo insufficiente ogni altro sistema esegetico (psicologismo a-storico, fenomenologia a-storica) le cui risultanze debbano

49) *Saggi di storia delle religioni* cit., p. 38.

50) *La religione nella Grecia antica* cit. (ed. 1955), p. II.

richiedere esse stesse una giustificazione storica in quanto non possono costituire di per sé l'estremo limite all'indagine che la storia legittimamente si propone per le proprie peculiari esigenze. Con ciò non negava, naturalmente, l'importanza del momento fenomenologico della ricerca: la fenomenologia è insufficiente, ma necessaria. Ed egli affiancava alla fenomenologia statica fondata sulla comparazione di forme, una fenomenologia dinamica fondata sulla comparazione di processi storici. „Ogni tipologia è necessariamente astratta, ma altra è quella che fissa tratti morfologici statici, e altra è quella che coglie delle analogie dinamiche di sviluppo”<sup>51</sup>). Donde il suo particolare interesse per la comparabilità di svolgimenti storici dialetticamente classificati<sup>52</sup>), e assunti con queste prospettive nella loro qualità di fenomeni. Donde le sue note definizioni di religioni nazionali, sopranazionali e prenazionali, o antiche, moderne e preantiche, oltre le quali bisogna riconoscere la tendenza a „costruire la storia religiosa sopra antitesi concettuali”<sup>53</sup>): nel caso specifico è la dialettica tra nazione e supernazione, tra particolarismo e totalitarismo, che fornisce i fondamenti alla definizione fenomenologica.

L'incontro di due religioni è un fatto che può produrre svolgimenti diversissimi che sono tuttavia altrettante soluzioni di un'antitesi concettuale i cui termini siano individuati nella fusione dell'una con l'altra (sincretismo) e nel risolvimento dell'una nell'altra (conversione). Posti tali termini dialettici, si veda quanta ricchezza di osservazioni nella comparazione storico-religiosa svolta in un articolo di 7 pagine intitolato „Sincretismo e conversione”<sup>54</sup>). Per esempio: la tipicità e la funzione del sincretismo nelle religioni „antiche”, nonché la tipicità e la funzione della conversione nelle religioni „moderne” („antiche” e „moderne” tipologicamente e non cronologicamente: v.n. 40, pag. 22). E in una particolare storia religiosa: l'individuazione dei due elementi — ellenico e preellenico — che concorsero alla formazione „sincretistica” della

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51) *Saggi di storia delle religioni* cit. p. 155.

52) V. ad esempio *A functional view of religions* „The review of Religion” 1 (1937), pp. 225-237, in cui è svolta una coerente comparazione tra Cristianesimo e Buddismo, tema a lui caro e più volte ripreso.

53) *Saggi di storia delle religioni* cit., p. XXI.

54) Una comunicazione letta al VII Congresso Internazionale di Scienze storiche (Varsavia 1933), pubblicata nel „Bulletin of the International Committee of Historical Sciences” 18 (1933), pp. 24-31, rielaborata nei *Saggi di storia delle religioni* cit., pp. 145-151.



religione greca (cfr. sopra, pag. 16): „il processo che domina tutto lo svolgimento della religione greca... non è che il prolungamento e una ripercussione di quell'iniziale dualismo". E ancora: l'imperialismo nelle sue manifestazioni religiose, i modi e i fini della propaganda religiosa, la genesi e la natura dello gnosticismo, la via antisincretistica del Cristianesimo...

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Si è detto come alla altrui qualifica di „uranismo" Pettazzoni opponesse la propria di „mitologismo" per definire la sua interpretazione degli Esseri supremi celesti. Sta di fatto che egli, sia pure nell'ambito del dominante naturismo, volgeva la sua attenzione al mito come ad una espressione tipicamente religiosa, inconfondibile rispetto ai prodotti della speculazione, dell'arte, della fantasia, nei quali soleva essere variamente risolto. Vuol dire che in un primo tempo si interessò soprattutto al processo mitopoietico, o al meccanismo della „personificazione" che ogni sistema naturistico sottintendeva come fattore puramente psicologico nella creazione religiosa, e tale, comunque, da non porre di per sé un problema storico; ed egli, invece, voleva proprio fare la storia della personificazione celeste. Ma in un secondo tempo, fuori da ogni limite o impedimento naturistico, guardò direttamente alla sostanza e alla funzione del mito, superando il tema della connessione di una singola verità mitica (relativa) con una singola realtà naturale (assoluta).

Per esemplificare questa evoluzione del suo pensiero, niente di più adatto parrebbe che un passo nel quale egli penetra la funzione della „oziosità" di certi Esseri supremi che „dopo aver creato il mondo si ritraggono in uno stato di inerzia passiva e di indifferenza": „Questa oziosità, che sembra incompatibile con la prodigiosa attività di un essere creatore, si risolve invece in un aspetto complementare dell'attività creatrice. Infatti, una volta creato il mondo e ordinato il cosmo, l'opera del Creatore è virtualmente compiuta; ogni ulteriore intervento da parte sua non solo sarebbe superfluo, ma rischierebbe di riuscire dannoso, potendo ogni alterazione del cosmo dar luogo ad una eventuale ricaduta nel caos. Una volta creato il mondo, la funzione esistenziale del Creatore si riduce a prolungarne la durata e a mantenerne la inalterata e inalterabile stabilità. L'oziosità dell'essere supremo, quasi una presenza inattiva, è la condizione meglio connaturata e la più propizia ad assicurare la permanenza delle cose create e la continuità degli effetti della

creazione" 55). Se ne è fatta di strada dai primi approcci con l'„oziosità" dell'essere celeste, quando „neghittosità e indolenza" erano riferite, quasi come dati obbiettivi, all' „aspetto statico del cielo" 56).

Ancora legati all'intelligenza del processo mitopoietico sono i saggi sulle personificazioni australiane del rombo e sul tema mitico della catena di frecce 57) (quest'ultimo tenta anche la dimensione storica della diffusione); entrambi tuttavia validi per quel particolare aspetto della problematica concernente il mito. Ma l'assiduo contatto con il materiale, con quei miti che la ricerca comparativa gli poneva ogni giorno all'attenzione, non lo lasciò a lungo indifferente alla esigenza di una valutazione scientifica di quel caratteristico elemento nozionale della religione. Ed allora il problema non fu più quello del „come", bensì quello del „quanto": e del resto non era strettamente compito di uno storico delle religioni, quale egli intendeva essere, stabilire *come* si realizzasse una rappresentazione d'ordine mitico, mentre, senza dubbio, non poteva non importargli *quanto* determinante fosse una tale rappresentazione nella definizione di una particolare religione o, anche, della religione in genere. Esprime il proprio giudizio in proposito con un fondamentale articolo intitolato alla *Verità del mito* 58); così egli contribuiva validamente al processo di rivalutazione del mito in sede di esegesi storico-religiosa che ha improntato gli studi da una quindicina di anni a questa parte.

Egli, lo storico, si affiancò nella ricerca all'etnologo e al fenomenologo, interessato soprattutto all'accertamento della attendibilità dei miti laddove essi sono narrati. La distinzione tra „storie vere" e „storie false" presso i Pawnee dell'America settentrionale diviene, al suo esame, altamente indicativa, e sul criterio di verità storicizzato, ossia riferito all'ambiente da cui è variamente espresso, si pongono le basi per l'interpretazione tecnica del mito. Dovunque è rilevabile una verità d'ordine particolare che rende tecnicamente „miti" certe tradizioni tribali: ora mediante la opposizione concettuale di vero e falso, di serio e risibile,

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55) *L'essere supremo nelle religioni primitive*, Torino 1957, p. 133.

56) *Dio: formazione e sviluppo del monoteismo...* cit., p. 351.

57) *Mitologia australiana del rombo*, „Rev. de l'Hist. des Religions" 65 (1912), pp. 149-170 (= *Saggi di storia delle religioni* cit., pp. 41-62), *The chain of arrows: the diffusion of a mythical motive*, „Folk-Lore" 35 (1924), pp. 151-165 (= *Saggi* cit., pp. 63-79).

58) *Verità del mito*, SMSR 21 (1947-48), pp. 104-116 (= *The truth of myth*, negli *Essays on the history of religions*, Leiden 1954, pp. 11-23).

ora nella opposizione empirica di esoterico e exoterico, di interdetto (o *the history of religions*”, come qualcuno ha detto certo troppo affrettatamente a restrizioni rituali nelle occasioni e nei modi della narrazione, nelle persone dei narratori, ecc.) e libero, ora nella opposizione quasi storiografica di „accaduto” e „non-accaduto”, di antico e recente, ecc. Ma la verità del mito non è d'ordine logico, né d'ordine magico-rituale, né tantomeno d'ordine storico; è invece una verità assoluta, qualificata per tale dalla assolutezza del suo contenuto: le origini, ovvero i principi che sorreggono il modo e la ragion d'essere di una società. Una simile verità è dunque obbiettivamente sorretta dalla società stessa finché questa vive ed opera nei suoi propri schemi esistenziali. E ogni atteggiamento, ogni comportamento (anche la sola enunciazione degli eventi mitici) che in qualche modo l'affermi, è *già religione* <sup>59</sup>).

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Oggi, a tre anni dalla scomparsa di R. Pettazzoni, non è difficile accertare la validità tutta attuale di quel giudizio che C. A. Bernoulli esprime prematuramente nel 1924. Oggi esiste una scuola italiana di storia delle religioni che affonda le radici nella tradizione storicistica definibile dalla personalità di un Benedetto Croce, ed è rappresentata „da studiosi della più varia provenienza intellettuale — crociana o cattolica, marxista o irrazionalista — che, a contatto con la persona e l'opera di Raffaele Pettazzoni, ne hanno profondamente assimilato l'insegnamento, al punto che si reputano e sono, ciascuno a modo suo, suoi continuatori” <sup>60</sup>). Oggi questa scuola nel nome di Pettazzoni, si pone validamente a fronte dei diversi indirizzi storico-religiosi, bene individuabile tra le più moderne correnti di studio, e sempre presente con la sua lucida opposizione dove si minacci l'avvenire della scienza delle religioni come disciplina storica <sup>61</sup>).

Se ciò è possibile, vuol dire che la morte di Pettazzoni fu tutt'altro

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<sup>59</sup>) I suoi particolari interessi per gli Esseri supremi lo porteranno a considerare la concezione dei „creatori” nel quadro del mito delle origini: „La nozione dell'Essere supremo creatore presso i popoli primitivi non è che una forma del mito delle origini”. Per la classificazione dei miti di creazione nel novero dei miti delle origini v. *Myth of beginnings and creation-myths*, negli *Essays* cit., pp. 24-36.

<sup>60</sup>) A. BRELICH, *In memoriam Raffaele Pettazzoni*, „Numen” 6 (1959), p. 76c.

<sup>61</sup>) V. ad es. la reazione a certi atteggiamenti emersi nel Congresso di Marburgo, espressa da A. BRELICH, *Ai margini del 10° Congresso Internazionale di Storia delle Religioni*, SMSR 31 (1960), pp. 121-128.

che „a symbol of the passing away of a special period in the study of tamente <sup>62)</sup>. In realtà, lo „special period” era stato superato da Pettazzoni vivente nella evoluzione del suo pensiero, dalla storiografia filologica alla fenomenologia storico-religiosa, dal comparativismo evoluzionistico al comparativismo storico, dal naturismo allo storicismo assoluto. Era senza dubbio all'avanguardia dei nostri studi il Pettazzoni che la morte ha colto mentre si accingeva con la consueta dedizione e con lo scrupolo consueto ad una totale revisione critica e ad un superamento delle posizioni irrazionalistiche suggestivamente „moderne” <sup>63)</sup>. Lo era il Pettazzoni che in quel medesimo anno aveva dettato per questa stessa rivista i fondamenti del metodo storico-religioso, quel comparativismo strumentale che individua il fenomeno e lo consegna alla storiografia nella quale, come ogni altro prodotto storico, dovrà essere *integralmente* risolto <sup>64)</sup>. Non ho detto il *suo* metodo, ma il metodo storico religioso tout-court. Ché se esso nasce dalla lunga esperienza di Pettazzoni, se è stato da lui elaborato nel corso della sua ricerca al fine di „storicizzare il metodo comparativo” e di „superare le posizioni unilaterali della fenomenologia e dello storicismo integrandole reciprocamente”, ciò non significa che sia desumibile dall'opera di Pettazzoni senza una sua esplicita formulazione. In altre parole: Pettazzoni ha indicato quel metodo non per fornire la giustificazione della propria opera scientifica, né per precisare la sua posizione critica nei confronti dell'opera altrui; egli ha bensì voluto dare una precisa *definizione* della storia delle religioni. Rivada il lettore a quelle pagine: non vi scorgerà tanto il giudizio sui tentativi — anche i suoi — storico-religiosi del passato, dai pionieri ai nostri giorni, quanto, invece, un programma per il prossimo svolgimento della storia delle religioni che, superata la fase di formazione, deve ormai affermarsi come disciplina consapevole dei propri compiti e dei propri limiti. Questa storia delle religioni che, stando alla stessa formulazione metodologica di Pettazzoni, è ancora tutta nel futuro.

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62) G. WIDENGREN, *In memoriam Raffaele Pettazzoni*, „Numen” 6 (1959), p. 76d.

63) Lo attestano *Gli ultimi appunti di Raffaele Pettazzoni*, schede, note appena abbozzate, raccolte e pubblicate a cura di A. Brelich in SMSR 31 (1960), pp. 23-55.

64) *Il metodo comparativo*, „Numen” 6 (1959), pp. 1-14.

*Nota biografica*

Raffaele Pettazzoni nacque nel 1883 a S. Giovanni in Persiceto (Bologna). Fu nominato ispettore al Museo preistorico ed etnografico di Roma, nel 1909. Dal 1914 ebbe presso l'Università di Bologna l'incarico dell'insegnamento di Storia delle religioni. Nel 1923 salì alla cattedra di Storia delle religioni dell'Università di Roma. Nel 1933 divenne Accademico d'Italia (poi Accademico dei Lincei, quando quell'Accademia riprese il suo nome originario). Nel 1950 fu eletto presidente dell'Associazione Internazionale per la Storia delle Religioni (I.A.H.R.) Morì a Roma l'8 dicembre del 1959. Per la sua bibliografia si rinvia all'elenco degli scritti pubblicato a cura di M. Gandini in SMSR 31 (1960), pp. 3-21.

# TRADITION AND LITERATURE IN EARLY JUDAISM AND IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

BY

GEO WIDENGREN

Uppsala

1. During recent years the problem of oral tradition and written literature has been much discussed in the field of Semitic, and especially perhaps Hebrew and Jewish studies. The researches going on in this field have mainly concentrated on the more remote periods of Hebrew literature, the periods when prose narratives were put into writing and when the sayings of the prophets — after being recorded by means of oral tradition — were written down. It is not necessary to dwell here on these researches in which I myself have been engaged for about 15 years. I should only like to mention two books on prophetic literature in which these problems have been made the central subjects, my own "Literary and Psychological Aspects of the Hebrew Prophets", published in 1948 and sold out since many years, and GUNNEWEG, "Mündliche und schriftliche Tradition der vorexilischen Prophetenbücher als Problem der neueren Prophetenforschung" from 1959. Like so many other works of recent German exegesis this book lacks originality, but gives a useful introduction to the discussion.<sup>1)</sup>

Concerning the transmission of prose narratives I should like to emphasize that this kind of literature has attracted considerably more interest, probably because the problem at issue here is linked up with the greater problem of written sources in the Pentateuch and later historical books. As recent expositions of the two diametrically opposed trends in recent research I may mention here as the representative of one trend NIELSEN, "Oral Tradition A Modern Problem in Old Testament Introduction", published 1954, with which should be

\*) The gist of this article was presented 1st February 1962 in a paper read to the Institute of Jewish Studies, University College, London. I thank Dr. J. G. Weiss for his kind invitation and active interest.

1) I hope to be able in a near future to take up for critical examination both this book and some other recent German publications in the field of O.T. exegesis.

compared the same author's "Schechem. A Traditio-historical Investigation" of which the 2nd edition was published in 1960.

According to my opinion NIELSEN is much more to his advantage in this doctor's thesis of his than in his more general monograph "Oral Tradition". This critical attitude of mine was voiced in the first of a series of articles, entitled "Oral Tradition and Written Literature" among the Hebrews in the Light of Arabic Evidence, with Special Regard to Prose Narratives", published in *Acta Orientalia*, Vol. 23/1959. As an outcome of my research work as a Visiting Lecturer in the Semitics Dept. of the University of Leeds last year I hope to be able to publish in a near future the second of this series, dealing in detail with the problems of oral and written sources, the manner of composition of great cycles of narration, and the transition from oral tradition to written literature. Apart from a shorter treatment by Prof. GUILLAUME the problem of oral tradition and written transmission in Post-Exilic Judaism had not been taken up for investigation and for this reason it was highly welcome that a very thorough treatment was given to it by a young Upsala scholar, Dr. GERHARDSSON, in his thesis "Manuscript and Memory. Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity", published last year (1961).

GERHARDSSON, being a New Testament scholar, is not interested in the methods of transmission of Rabbinic Judaism *per se*, but as providing the necessary background of the problems of gospel tradition in Early Christianity. He also gives some references—rather casually by the way—to the relation of oral and written transmission outside Rabbinic Judaism. Nevertheless his treatment of Rabbinic Judaism occupies the greater part of the book (pp. 19-189) and may be said to be the more valuable part of a book which is both very stimulating and important.

This positive judgement should be stressed here at the outset in order that what follows might not be seen in a false perspective, my intention being chiefly to supplement and criticize the exposition given by Dr. GERHARDSSON.

2. As scholars we all stand in a tradition, we are like traditionists handing down the traditions. This can be done in several ways, some adhering more closely and faithfully to the tradition of the school, others more fond of an independent position, perhaps ultimately founding a school of their own.

It doesn't demand any greater effort to discover to what school and

to what type of scholar Dr. GERHARDSSON belongs. Already his way of reviewing the literature, treating the problem in question, reveals him to be a faithful disciple of what is outside Scandinavia called "The Upsala School" but which should more properly be called "the School of Prof. Engnell" which has an offshoot in Copenhagen where Prof. NIELSEN is another representative of that school.<sup>2)</sup> This attitude of his becomes still more recognizable when we proceed to the author's treatment of the relevant facts and problems. So when he says (*op. cit.*, p. 81 n. 5) that for the manner of transmission in Israel "such expressions as" "put the words in someone's mouth" or "on someone's heart" "give us a picture of the way in which oral texts were transmitted".

Accordingly we are here concerned with a transmission of what the author — not quite happily — calls "oral texts". It seems therefore highly desirable to proceed to an examination of the passages to which the author refers in this connection.

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2) It seems to me rather significant that the references given by the author *op. cit.*, p. 72 n. 1 are in need of some rather important qualifications. Thus the essential rôle played by Prof. NYBERG in emphasizing the oral tradition in the Ancient Near East and especially in Israel has been left unmentioned. His article in *ZAW* 52/1934 and his "*Studien zum Hoseabuche*" of 1935 are given as introducing the literature on the problem, but not even a single word is said about the fact that he was the originator of an idea from which a considerable host of followers have been living — without adding anything new on principle. Next it should not be left unnoticed that the references are both deficient and tendentious. So *e.g.* an article by Prof. LAESSØE in the Pedersen-Festschrift, "*Studia Orientalia... Ioanni Pedersen dedicata*", pp. 205 ff., where he criticizes NIELSEN's treatment of Mesopotamian conditions, is characteristically enough left unmentioned both here and in the general bibliography. Prof. RINGGREN finds a place among the scholars who see the problem from a "positive" point of view in spite of the fact that he was very careful to point out in his article in *Studia Theologica* 3/1949, pp. 34 ff. that no general conclusions could be drawn from his article, treating a problem of detail as it did (for some remarks cf. WIDENGREN *Acta Orientalia* 23/1959, pp. 212 ff.) Prof. VAN DEN PLOEG has not been mentioned either which leaves me alone in the company of GUNNEWEG as a spokesman for "a more limited rôle ... assigned to oral tradition" (GUNNEWEG's book is said to be "written more from a negative point of view", so there is after all a certain distinction made between us — for which I am grateful).

Because some erroneous ideas concerning the emergence and development of the "Upsala School" are extant in some quarters a reference to the Preface of ENGNELL, "Divine Kingship" (1943) may not be out of place. The author has there correctly acknowledged his debt to his teachers NYBERG (Semitic Languages) and WIDENGREN (Assyriology, Comparative Religion).



We start this examination with Deut. XI 18 where Moses is speaking to the children of Israel:

Ye shall lay up these my words on your heart and on your soul,  
and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as  
marks between your eyes.

In v. 19 follows the exhortation to teach the children these words, and in v. 20 it is expressly stated in what manner they are to be preserved:

And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thine house,  
and upon thy gates.

We meet then, with an exhortation to transmit in a visible, written form the words of law communicated by Moses. We may mention that the passage Deut. XI 13-21 has been found among the Dead Sea scrolls even as a phylactery (cf. *Les grottes de Murabba'at*, p. 83 f. )!

Our next passage is Deut. XVIII 18 where the divine message to Moses runs as follows:

A prophet I will raise up to them from amongst their brethren,  
like thee, and I will put my words in his mouth; and he shall  
speak to them all that I shall command him.

Here we are confronted with the prophet's *inspiration* from God, the *message* the prophet gives to his people, being received from his God.

Within the Book of Deuteronomy there is a third passage in XXXI 19 where God gives the following command to Moses concerning the so-called "Song of Moses":

And now write ye this song for you,  
and teach it the sons of Israel,  
put it in their mouth,  
that this song may be for me  
a witness against the sons of Israel.

Accordingly it is said in v. 22:

Moses wrote this song on that day,  
and taught it the sons of Israel.

We conclude then that first of all it was a process of writing down and after that instruction: teaching and learning.

In II Sam. XIV 3, in the story of how Joab summoned a wise woman from Tekoah, he says to her:

Go in to the king, and speak to him according to this word; and Joab put the words in her mouth.

Thus, in this passage too we meet with a message, but in this case from man to man, not from God to man.

In the Book of Isaiah there are two passages referred to by the author. In the first one, LI 16 God speaks in the following way:

And I have put my words in thy mouth,  
and with the shadow of my hand I have covered thee,  
to plant the heavens and to found the earth,<sup>3)</sup>  
and to say to Zion: "My people art thou".

Here again there is a message from God to be conveyed to Zion, his people.

The second passage is Isaiah LIX 21:

And as to me — this is my covenant with them, saith Yahwe,  
my Spirit, that is upon thee,  
and my words which I put in thy mouth,  
shall not depart from thy mouth  
and from the mouth of thy seed,  
and from the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Yahwe,  
from now and unto eternity.

Here we are surely entitled to think of an oral repetition of the statement of the covenant in accordance with the divine message. On the other hand a comparison with Deut. XXXI 19 shows that such a process not at all means that this *berit* couldn't be written down.

We next devote our attention to Job XXII where Elifaz in his third speech says to Job:

Receive the Tōrāh from his mouth,  
and put his words in thy heart.

We find in this passage then, a receiving of instruction from God, but not a single word about oral transmission of this Tōrāh!

Our last passage is Ezra VIII 17 where Ezra in his memories says:

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3) The words שמים and ארץ receive no article in archaic poetic style, cf. above all the Song of Deborah; cf. Judges V 4.

And I commanded them (to go) to Iddo, the head at the place Casiphia, and I put in their mouth words to say to Iddo and his brethren...

Here again a message from one man to another.

If we finally sum up the result of our investigation of the passages referred to by Dr. GERHARDSSON we find that out of 8 passages there is in 5 passages the question of a message to be conveyed, in 3 passages from God, in 2 from one man to another. In one passage it is spoken of how the Tōrāh should be accepted from God, but nothing is said about a transmission of this Tōrāh. In one passage order is given by God to preserve in written form the words of the law and the passage in question, Deut. XI 13-21, is even used as a text for phylacteries. In one passage we have to do with a writing down of a song. There was only one passage, Is. LIX 21, where the message from God, containing the words of his covenant, could be thought of as being repeated orally. But there was nothing in this passage indicating that these words were *not* to be written down.

This being the situation we must ask: where in these passages do we meet with a clear indication of an oral transmission? Do really the expressions **שִׁים (נתן) הדברים בפי (על לבב) פלוני** "give us a picture of the way in which oral texts were transmitted" as the author puts it? This does not seem to be the case. Of course it could be said — as it actually was by the author at the public discussion — that he is only concerned with the expressions in themselves, irrespective of their context. To this I should like to reply — as I did at the same occasion — that the true meaning of a "technical" expression must be ascertained from the context in which it is found. It may be assumed that if the author had examined the passages in which the expressions in question are found he would presumably not have expressed himself with the same confidence. To my mind an examination of the context where we come across these expression shows that they *per se* have nothing to tell us about the manner of transmission, whether it was oral, or written, or both. Moreover, I find the expression "oral texts" singularly misleading when applied indiscriminately, but I do not intend here to enter upon a discussion of the meaning of "oral texts".

3. Before we leave the author's treatment of Old Testament material a few words must be said of his attitude to the problems of the

masoretic text because here too his presuppositions appear in a very clear light, showing him as a true pupil of his teacher Prof. ENGNELL.

The author states first of all — and correctly — that the recension which we call “masoretic” was in existence already at the beginning of the Christian era and — “as far as certain books at least are concerned — is not a later creation of the Masoretes” (p. 38 f.). I should like to emphasize here that the author in this place is quite clear over the fact that the evidence available up to now is only valid for certain books. He then, however, goes on to say: “For our purposes, it is sufficient to point to such an imperfect scroll as I Q Is<sup>a</sup>, and to see how little even this deviates from the masoretic text” (p. 40). This statement is rather misleading, for we remember that one of the striking features of the I Q Is<sup>a</sup> scroll is that it provides us with some variant readings in places where modern scholarship had found it necessary to correct obviously corrupt passages in the masoretic text, or with some readings otherwise found in the Septuagint. In this connection it is certainly curious to note that an Upsala scholar doesn’t quote the painstaking analysis of the Isaiah-text undertaken by such an accomplished expert in text-criticism as Prof. LÖFGREN of the University of Upsala.<sup>4)</sup> At any rate the impression created by the author is false. Here attention should be drawn to the articles of CROSS and SKEHAN, quoted by the author but obviously not read or digested.<sup>5)</sup> These articles demonstrate how superior in many passages the Dead Sea fragments of O.T. books are, as compared with the masoretic text, and further to what degree they go *with* the Septuagint and other versions in some of the historical books.

Because of the author’s lack of insight into O.T. textual problems

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4) Cf. LÖFGREN, *Donum Natalicium H. S. Nyberg oblatum* (1954), pp. 171 ff., esp. p. 183. This article is neither mentioned p. 40 n. 2 nor in the bibliography. Instead of that the author has preferred to quote KUHL, *VT* II/1952, pp. 307 ff., thus also leaving MILLAR BURROWS and his pioneer work unmentioned.

5) Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 37 n. 4, where several contributions of various scholars are quoted. I should like to refer especially to CROSS, The oldest manuscripts from Qumran, *JBL*/1955, pp. 147 ff., esp. p. 171 f., later incorporated into his *The Ancient Library of Qumrân and Modern Biblical Studies* (1958), and SKEHAN, *Supplements to VT* 4/1957, pp. 148 ff. That the author in this connection has mentioned AHLSTRÖM, *Psalms* 89 (1959) is quite astonishing and shows the author to be unacquainted with textual problems, for in this otherwise useful and valuable work the part treating the masoretic text and related textcritical problems is the weakest part and not at all of the same quality as the rest of the book.

it is not at all to be wondered at that he can present the following statement. "Thus the text of the written Tōrāh has, during the period with which we are concerned here i.e. from the beginning of the Christian era, been preserved with remarkable precision" (p. 40).

First of all we should note here the ambiguous use of the term "Tōrāh". What does the author in this place mean by Tōrāh? Let us note that his starting point was the I Q Is<sup>a</sup> text, and now he speaks of the Tōrāh! If we go to p. 21 we find that the author actually declares that in his investigation he will use the term Tōrāh, "without qualification", as a collective designation for the Jews' sacred authoritative tradition (doctrine) in its entirety." This means that his statement is to be valid for the whole O.T. textual tradition, and as such it is absolutely wrong, clearly demonstrating that the author knows nothing about the textcritical problems of e.g. the Books of Samuel <sup>6)</sup> and the Books of Kings. <sup>7)</sup>

The term Tōrā on the whole is a rather vague one and in at least one case the author has to observe (p. 68 n. 5) that this term denotes the Pentateuch. If "Tōrāh" is used in Jewish literature of our period in this special sense the two other main parts are usually given special names as is well known, *neḥi'im* and *ketūbim*, the whole of the sacred Scriptures being called either *kātūb* or *miqrā*<sup>3</sup>. This is of course pointed out by the author (p. 20 f.). He has not observed, however, that at least *miqrā* too, is an ambiguous term, for it is quite evident that it can denote the Pentateuch only. This was pointed out by SCHLATTER in his biography of Jochanan ben Zakkai. This great rabbi is said to have been reading *tōrāh*, *miqrā*<sup>3</sup>, *neḥi'im*, and *ketūbim*, from which notice SCHLATTER concluded that *miqrā*<sup>3</sup> in this place must denote the Pentateuch. <sup>8)</sup> By the way, we may note the significant use of both *kātūb* and *miqrā*<sup>3</sup> as terms for the scriptures. They were both written and read.

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6) For the Books of Samuel cf. already WELLHAUSEN, *Der Text der Bücher Samuelis* (1871).

7) For the Books of Kings cf. BURNEY, *Notes on the Text of the Books of Kings* (1903), esp. pp. 104-109 on First Book VIII 1-11 where *TM* is vastly inferior to *LXX*.

8) Cf. SCHLATTER, *Jochanan ben Zakkai* (1899), p. 20 f. The statement is found in Aboth R. Naḥtan, 30: text ed. SCHECHTER, Wien 1887.

In the Samaritan liturgies מקרא is used as a word for "Scripture", cf. COWLEY, I, p. 46 : 14.

After this digression we revert to the author's exposition. After his (erroneous) statement about the masoretic text he says: "It is an eloquent picture we get if we compare the preserved — *i.e.* the finally fixed — masoretic text with the preserved *targumim*, even the Targum of Onkelos, not to mention the *midrashim*. Side by side with a general tendency towards diverse, dynamic adaptation of the content of the text, there has continually been a tendency to detailed, static reproduction of its wording" (p. 40).

According to my opinion this statement is apt to be rather confusing and therefore misleading, because the author has not distinguished clearly between three different categories. First of all we have the text, in the author's terminology: the *Tōrāh*, then the Aramaic translations: the *targumim*, and finally the commentaries and expositions: the *midrashim*. That the attitude to the holy text itself must be quite different from the attitude to sometimes highly paraphrasing translations, as the targums are, and still more to the midrashim, goes without saying. The author here compares three various categories which are in fact impossible to compare. This is shown by his speaking on the one hand of "the context of the text" on the other hand of "its wording", two completely different entities. If we speak of the transmission of a *text* we are concerned of course with the faithful reproduction of its very wording.

I do not enter upon a discussion of what the author has to say about the so-called "stabilization" of the text of the Scriptures. When he observes, however, "that the rabbinical literature says nothing about such a new methodical attempt to stabilize the text" (p. 40 n. 1) I should like to draw attention to corresponding phenomena in the history of the transmission of the Qurʾān. If JEFFERY had not collected such a great number of ancient manuscripts, we would never have known to what an astonishing extent the text of the Qurʾān has been "stabilized".<sup>9)</sup>

4. After these preliminaries we may pass to a short account of the actual state of problems which according to Dr. GERHARDSSON—and he is certainly right—called for an investigation of this kind.

The author introduces his book by remembering us of the fact that a new and fruitful epoch of gospel research was opened by the publica-

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9) Cf. JEFFERY, *Materials for the history of the text of the Qurʾān* (1937).

tions in 1919 and 1921 by DIBELIUS and BULTMANN, the years they published their pioneer works on the form-criticism of the gospels.<sup>10)</sup>

He also mentions in a note (p. 9 n. 1) a third work, that of K. L. SCHMIDT.<sup>11)</sup>

Now Dr. GERHARDSSON contends that "neither of the two pioneer works on the form-criticism of the gospel tradition makes any attempt to define the concept of tradition in early christianity" (p. 13). "The pioneer form-critics work with a diffuse concept of tradition and give only vague hints as to how the early Christian gospel tradition was transmitted, technically speaking" (p. 14). The author criticizes BULTMANN e.g. because he doesn't give us any concrete picture of how he considers, from the purely technical point of view, the gospel tradition to have been transmitted" (p. 14). The author therefore finds it "necessary to determine what was the technical procedure followed when the early Church *transmitted*, both gospel material and other material" (p. 14 f.). His thesis is intended to be an attempt in this direction.

To this it should first of all be observed that the grand old man of form-criticism, Prof. BULTMANN in a very positive manner has received the new phase in research which was introduced *inter alia* by the publication of Prof. STENDAHL's, *The School of St. Matthew and its Use of the Old Testament* (1954). He himself has clearly felt that a new stage had been reached in research on gospel tradition.<sup>12)</sup> This is obviously not the case with Dr. GERHARDSSON who only mentions STENDAHL's book quite casually (p. 14 n. 5) without attributing any principal significance to it. We may ask here if the author has not to some extent lost the right perspective by concentrating exclusively as he does on the purely technical aspect of the process of transmission.

The investigation as it goes is concentrated on what the author calls "the main currents within Judaism". He devotes "only limited attention to the sectarian movements which were to be found on both sides of this main stream". He includes however, also some material from "the surrounding Hellenistic world" (p. 15).

Though it is of course meritorious that the author does not restrict

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10) DIBELIUS, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, 2nd ed. 1933; BULTMANN, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, 3rd ed. 1957.

11) SCHMIDT, *Der Rahmen der Geschichte Jesu* (1919).

12) Cf. BULTMANN, *Die Erforschung der synoptischen Evangelien*, 3. Aufl. 1960, p. 52 f.

himself to a treatment of tradition and transmission in Rabbinic Judaism it is nevertheless highly regrettable that he so markedly has concentrated on what he calls "the main currents within Judaism".

First of all it should be observed that we do not know at all that at the time when Jesus came forth Rabbinic Judaism really constituted "the main current within Judaism". To speak in this connection of "sectarian movements" is also certainly misleading. As there was at that time not such an entity as "normative Judaism"—as G. F. MOORE thought<sup>13)</sup>—there could be no "sectarian movements". If there is no established church there can be no sects.<sup>14)</sup> It would seem that the author operates here with an oldfashioned historical picture of the Judaism at the beginning of the Christian era, a picture totally revised by modern research<sup>15)</sup> and, by the way, never accepted by some outstanding scholars of an older generation.<sup>16)</sup>

Above all it would have been all-important to say something more about the idea of tradition in the apocalyptic movements which played such a considerable role, and the relations of which with the group behind some of the most important writings of the Dead Sea scrolls are apparent. Here especially the movement behind such writings as the Book of Jubilees, the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs, and the Ethiopic Book of Enoch calls for notice, not the least because of their close connections with both the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Jesus and his first followers.<sup>17)</sup>

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13) Cf. MOORE, *Judaism*, I (1927), p. 44, III (1930), pp. 17 ff. and for criticism GOODENOUGH, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, I (1953), pp. 6 ff. and RENGSTORF, *Hirbet Qumran und die Bibliothek vom Toten Meer* (1960), p. 70 n. 164 a. Cf. further the following statement of another expert: "Again, it is becoming ever clearer that Palestinian Judaism of the first century was far more varied and flexible than preoccupation with the particular line which ultimately prevailed would lead us to assume," DAUBE, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (1956), Preface p. IX. Reference may also be made to DAVIES, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (1948), p. 3 f.

14) C. SIMON, *Les sectes juives au temps de Jésus* (1960), pp. 3-16, esp. p. 8.

15) The Dead Sea scrolls have clearly shown that e.g. BOUSSET saw the real things far better than e.g. GEORGE FOOT MOORE or BONSRVEN.

16) E.g. such scholars as BOUSSET and GRESSMANN, and in a younger generation GOODENOUGH.

17) The author says p. 31: "The Apocalyptic group's study of their secret books seems to have been carried on following roughly the same principles as the study of the written Torah, though there would seem to have been no reason why, in these circles, such texts could not be learned from the lips of the teacher" (*op. cit.*, p. 31 f.) Here the author is somewhat vague and we do not really get to know whether he thinks the transmission to have been oral or written or both. The con-



As it now is, the author has not neglected the problem, but he has devoted very little space and attention to it. His general supposition, that probably "written transmission played a more prominent role within these groups than in Rabbinic Judaism" (p. 30) is certainly correct and could be put in a more positive way, but why this was, or rather *must* have been the case, the author does not seem to have understood.<sup>18)</sup> To this essential questions we are coming back later, but it should be observed already now that the rabbis had to transmit and expound an existing, quite fixed tradition, whereas the apocalyptic and related groups put forth their own form of revelation, adding it to the revelation received since the days of Moses. The apocalyptic groups present incessantly as it were new copies of the Heavenly Book and for that reason have to concentrate on the written word, on "the Book".<sup>19)</sup> The rabbis have no such ambition, they concentrate therefore on the oral exposition of an already existing "Book", the Scriptures. What they are transmitting is the schooltradition of the exegetes and preachers.

5. The instruction received in non-rabbinical circles was founded on a study of their writings, quite obviously including also their own books as distinguished from the Scriptures which they shared with rabbinical schools.

The author thinks that we may find a correspondance of the rabbinical *bēt hammidrāš* in the Qumrān texts where we meet with the expression *bēt hattōrāh* and *bēt hammišpāṭ*. He presumes that "there is a possibility in both cases that the language is based on the sect's name for the house which they used for study and law-making" (*op. cit.* p. 88 n. 3). Now admittedly (and the author quite correctly concedes that) neither expression has anything to do in the texts—as published up to now—with any institution found in the early life of the Qumrān movement. The expression *bēt hattōrāh* CD XX 10, 13 has a clearly positive sense, it is

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fusion between transmission and learning by heart also calls for notice. A pupil learning a written text by heart is on principle to be distinguished from a traditionist transmitting the unpublished words of his teacher (or same other traditionist) by means of oral tradition. This distinction has not been adequately expressed by the author

18) Cf. below p. 56 ff.

19) Cf. below p. 57-60. This Heavenly Book and its secrets are therefore constantly being revealed, ἀποκαλύπτειν. The author of such a writing is inspired by the Spirit of God, he is a pneumatic, cf. BOUSSET-GRESSMANN, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*, 3rd ed. (1926), pp. 394 ff. Cf. also BETZ, *Offenbarung und Schriftforschung in der Qumransekte* (1960), p. 61.

something good to hope for <sup>20</sup>). The expression *bēt hammišpāt* on the other hand, I Q p<sup>H</sup> VIII 2; X 3, while also possessed of an eschatological meaning quite obviously denotes the place where God's judgement is passed on the godless sinners, thus indicating something with a negative value. <sup>21</sup>) It is then presumably evident that these two terms, possessed of an diametrically opposite value, shouldn't be confused, and thought to designate the same institution. Accordingly, for the present at least, nothing of use for our present problem can be deduced from these two terms.

That there was, however, an instruction given quite regularly in the Qumrān community is obvious and the author has correctly drawn attention to this fact (p. 58).

But when he says that "neither Philo, Josephus nor the Dead Sea Scrolls give us any further information as to how elementary instruction was carried on", he would seem to have neglected to look up the passage I Q Sa I b f. <sup>22</sup>) where we read: <sup>23</sup>)

And from his childhood one should teach him in the Book of

20) Cf. RABIN, *The Zadokite Documents*, 2. ed. 1958, p. 39. The text runs: **אין להם חלק בבית התורה** the sinners have no share in "the House of the Law." RABIN, *Qumran Studies* (1957), p. 74 compares corresponding eschatological expressions in Christianity and Islam.

21) The text runs: **אשר יצלם אל מבית המשפט** DUPONT-SOMMER, *Les écrits esséniens* (1959) p. 275 n. 5 speaks of the "Tribunal qui jugera les hommes à la fin des temps".

In one of the sources of the Book of Jubilees, *viz.* the Book of Noah, it is said that an angel, Rafa<sup>el</sup>, brought nine parts of the demons to "the House of Judgement" **בית המשפט**, where he imprisoned them. This relation is given Jub. X 8-9, but here the Ethiopic text has *makāna daḡn* (cf. also X 5, 11), "the place of condemnation", as it is translated by CHARLES, *op. cit.*, p. 81. There is no mention here of Rafa<sup>el</sup> either. There is, however, a parallel Hebrew version extant in a Midrash (cf. CHARLES, *The Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book of Jubilees*, p. 179 and the relevant passage transl. by CHARLES p. 81) and here Rafa<sup>el</sup> imprisons the nine parts of mankind in what is called *bēt hammišpāt*. Accordingly there can be no doubt about what is meant with this term. It designates really "the place of condemnation" and has nothing to do with any house used for study and law-making, as Dr. GERHARDSSON suggested. The Ethiopic expression *makāna daḡn* would seem to translate a Greek term where the Hebrew **בית** perhaps was rendered in a more general way.

22) Actually the author (p. 58 n. 6) has referred to this text without observing anything else than the ten years instruction mentioned I 7 f.

23) The text is published in BARTHÉLEMY-MILIK, *Qumran Cave I* (1956), p. 109 f. with translation.

Meditation, and according to his age they shall instruct him in the Statutes of the Covenant.

What is important here is to note that this teaching and instruction—for which the verbs *למד* and *השכיל* are used—is carried out by means of a written document, the book called “the Book of Meditation”.<sup>24</sup> We can see at once what a central rôle *the book* occupies in the instruction of the members.

6. It is—as already observed—meritorious that the author has tried to see the actual problem in a wider context. He has thus included into his investigation some references to what he calls “the ancient Near East and Classical Antiquity” (p. 157 f.). It must be pointed out, however, that his analysis of prevalent conditions is regrettably lacking in precision.

First of all it calls for notice that very slight evidence is given from the ancient Near East. His references (p. 157 n. b) outside Classical Antiquity and Christianity include only a passage in the Aristeas-letter 127 where we actually read that the moral ideal is embodied in the law.<sup>25</sup>)

For, (he explained,) the good life consists in the keeping of the enactments of the Law, and this end is achieved much more by hearing than by reading.

To conclude from this statement that it should reflect any “opposition to the written word” seems to be a rather daring undertaking.<sup>26</sup>)

More serious, however, is the deficiency in the author’s knowledge about the fundamental difference in near eastern and Indo-European (classic) religions in the case of oral and written religious tradition.<sup>27</sup>) For Semitic—including Jewish—conditions it is therefore not much use in adducing material from Classical Antiquity, except as far as the

24) Cf. on this book DUPONT-SOMMER, *op. cit.*, p. 86. We are not quite sure of the title but the proposal of the editors to read *ספר ההג'י* is surely attractive, cf. *op. cit.*, p. 113. It is possible that a corresponding Samaritan term for “school” was *bēsafrā*, cf. COWLEY, *Samaritan Liturgy*, I, p. 16: 9-10, but the context is difficult to use for our purpose; cf. also p. 54: 8.

25) Cf. CHARLES, ed., *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, II, p. 107. For the Greek text of this passage, cf. WENDLAND, *Arist. Epist.*, p. 36: *τό γὰρ καλῶς ζῆν ἐν τῷ τὰ νόμιμα συντηρεῖν εἶναι, τοῦτο δ' ἐπιτελεῖσθαι διὰ τῆ ἀκροάσεως πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἢ διὰ τῆς ἀναγνώσεως.*

26) The author p. 157 n. 6 refers *inter alia* to the Aristeas-letter 127.

27) Cf. WIDENGREN, *Religionens värld*, 2. ed. (1953), p. 491 f. The Greek and Roman religions in their older stages hardly know the notion of “Holy Scriptures”.

mystery religions are concerned, for in them conditions reminiscent of early Christianity are to be found.<sup>28)</sup>

If we then turn to mystery religions we may refer to an important inscription, DITTENBERGER, *Sylloge*, 3. ed. No. 736. Here the clear antipathy for what is ἀγραφα, unwritten, calls for notice.<sup>29)</sup> This antipathy is quite understandable, because "secret written texts seem to have played a remarkable role in the mystery religions of Classical Antiquity", as the author himself observes" (p. 158). Of this fundamental insight the author has, however, made no use. He has not understood the relation between *written revelation* and *esoteric knowledge*, "*disciplina arcana*". Between them there is no antithesis. The esoteric knowledge is chiefly concerned with the ritual, whereas the Scriptures teach the doctrines. A good illustration is provided by the Isis mysteries as they are described in Apuleius XU 23.<sup>30)</sup>

The mysteries, even when communicated orally in the form of a direct revelation from the Deity to the worshipper should obviously be taken into the pen as soon as possible. The introduction of the so-called Mithras liturgy is illustrative on this point, for there we read, DIETERICH, *Eine Mithrasliturgie*, p. 2: <sup>31)</sup>

Peace be with me from you, Providence and Soul,  
when I am writing down these first, transmitted mysteries.

The way in which these mysteries were *orally* communicated are on the other hand well illustrated in Firmicus Materuns, *De errore relig.* prof. ch. 5: *Sicut propheta eis tradidit nobis dicens*. This last mentioned passage ought to have been quoted even by the author!

7. In a few words I have already touched upon the importance of the idea of a written, holy tradition, a heavenly revelation, as it were, embodied in the visible form of a book. It is in this book, often called "the Book of Life", that the righteous are inscribed.<sup>32)</sup> In the Testa-

<sup>28)</sup> Cf. WIDENGREN, *Handb. d. Orientalistik*, VIII 2, p. 68, 77.

<sup>29)</sup> Cf. the passage also in Pausanias IV 26, 6-8 and the discussion in LEIPOLDT-MORENZ, *Heilige Schriften* (1953), S. 37 f. We should note the use of the formula γέγραπται.

<sup>30)</sup> Cf. the text Apuleius XI 22, 7: *de opertis adyti profert libros litteris ignobilibus prae notatos*.

<sup>31)</sup> We should read ψυχῇ as the Parisian papyrus actually has, cf. DIETERICH, *op. cit.*, 3rd ed., p. 218 f.

<sup>32)</sup> WIDENGREN, *The Ascension of the Apostle and the Heavenly Book*, Uppsala (1950), pp. 36-39; *Muhammad, the Apostle of God* (1955), pp. 139 ff.

ment of Benjamin XI 4 we read of Benjamin, CHARLES, *The Greek Versions*, p. 231: ,

And he shall be inscribed in the holy books, both his work and his word.

We should observe here the expression "his work and his word" to which we shall revert later. <sup>33)</sup>

The Book of the Law according to the writings of the Qumran community was sealed and laid in the ark, therefore not accessible in Israel until the arrival of the priest Sadoq. It was for that reason that David had not read this "sealed Book of the Law", CDC V 2-5, <sup>34)</sup> which obviously is meant to explain the transgressions of David as regards polygamy, forbidden by the Qumran community. <sup>35)</sup>

The gnostic sect of the Sethians, a movement with a blend of Jewish and Iranian ideas, the origin of which would seem to be pre-Christian, was dominated by the same idea of holy writings, written by one of the forefathers, Seth, and then preserved for a long time in a secret place, the cave of Treasures. <sup>36)</sup> Other sects possessing either a Jewish or a Samaritan background founded their preaching and propaganda on a revealed, holy Writing, sometimes conceived of as brought down from heaven. <sup>37)</sup> I should like to mention in this connection the Mandaeans, <sup>38)</sup> the sect of Simon Magus with his ἡ μεγάλη ἀπόφασις, a sect possessing a clear Samaritan background, <sup>39)</sup> further the group behind "the Book of Baruch of the Gnostic Justin", where the background seems to be Hellenistic-Jewish, <sup>40)</sup> and ultimately Elxai and his followers, again a sect where the fundamental gnostic doctrines are combined with a very clear Jewish origin. <sup>41)</sup>

33) Cf. below p. 72. The Greek expression is τὸ ἔργον καὶ ὁ λόγος.

34) The text runs as follows: **וְדוֹיֵד לֹא קָרָא בְּסֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַחֲתוּם אֲשֶׁר הָיָה בְּאֵרוֹן כִּי לֹא נִפְתַּח בִּישְׂרָאֵל מִיּוֹם מוֹת אֱלֶעָזָר וַיִּשְׁעוּ וְהִזְקִימוּ אֲשֶׁר עֲבָדוּ הָעִשְׂתָּרֶת יִטְמָנוּ נִגְלָה עַד עֲמוּד צְדוּקָה.**

35) Cf. DUPONT-SOMMER, *op. cit.*, p. 144 n. 6.

36) Cf. GOETZE, *Die Schatzhöhle* (1922), p. 39 f.; DORESSE, *The Secret Books of the Egyptian Gnostics* (1960), p. 185 f. and for Seth also WIDENGREN, *Muhammad, the Apostle of God* (1955), p. 23 f.

37) Cf. WIDENGREN, *The Ascension of the Apostle*, pp. 40-58.

38) Cf. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-76.

39) Cf. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.*, p. 50 f.

40) Cf. HAENCHEN, *ZfThK* 50/1953, pp. 123-158, and for the Jewish background esp. pp. 132-138.

41) Cf. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.*, p. 51 f.

In all these gnostic sects tradition is based on writings, and these writings in their turn often are based on expositions and interpretations of other writings, existing before them, but now lost to us except in the cases where they have turned up again in the gnostic manuscripts found in Egypt in Nag Hamadi. <sup>42)</sup>

What is interesting in these writings is the method of exegesis applied to the Scriptures of the Jews, as contained in the canonical collection of *Tōrāh*, *neḥṣīm* and *ketūbīm*. This method is entirely allegorical, it is of the same nature as that used by Philon. <sup>43)</sup> This allegorical method should be compared with that used in the Qumran writings, in the Rabbinical circles, and among early Christians, e.g. Paul. <sup>44)</sup>

The Book of the Jubilees mentions Enoch as the first scribe and the first author of a book IV 17-18: <sup>45)</sup>

And he was the first among men that are born on earth who learnt writing and knowledge and wisdom and who wrote down the signs of heaven according to the order of their months in a book, that men might know the seasons of the years according to the order of their separate months. And he was the first to write a testimony, <sup>46)</sup> and he testified <sup>47)</sup> to the sons of men among the generations of the earth, and recounted the weeks of the jubilees, and made known to them the days of the years, and set in order the months and recounted the Sabbaths of the years as we made (them) known to him.

Noah also was the author of a book which he handed over to his son Shem, X 13-14: <sup>48)</sup>

And Noah wrote down all things in a book as we instructed him concerning every kind of medicine.

And he gave all that he had written to Shem, his eldest son.

42) Cf. DORESSE, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-241.

43) Cf. for Philo e.g. STEIN, *Die allegorische Exegese des Philo aus Alexandria* (1929).

44) We lack such a comparative investigation. For Philo as compared with the rabbis and their methods we have STEIN, *Philo und der Midrasch* (1931).

45) Cf. CHARLES, *The Book of the Jubilees, transl.* (1902), p. 37. For Enoch cf. also WIDENGREN, *Muhammad*, p. 23 f.

46) Cf. CHARLES, *op. cit.*, p. 37, Ethiopic: *weʾetū qad(d)āmā šahafa semʿa*.

47) Cf. below p. 62, 76 n. 102 on the terms "testimony" and "testify".

48) Cf. CHARLES, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

These books written by Enoch and Noa were used by the author of the Book of the Jubilees as he tells us XXI 10: 49)

For thus I have found it written in the books of my fore-fathers, and in the words of Enoch, and in the words of Noah.

We should also note here the use of the term "words" as a name of these books of the patriarchs.

In the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs the Book of Enoch is mentioned several times.<sup>50)</sup> That book in itself is composed of various writings and accordingly not based on oral tradition.<sup>51)</sup> Among these older writings the Book of Noah (probably lost) has been one of the chief sources.<sup>52)</sup>

Among other books mentioned in the Testaments (*i.e.* in the Bodleian Fragments) is a "Book of the Discipline of Wisdom". So CHARLES, *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, p. 255: 88.

And now, my sons, teach your sons the Book of the Discipline and let Wisdom be with you a glory of eternity of Wisdom.<sup>53)</sup>

Shortly after this passage we find another where possibly the same book is referred to, p. 255: 90.

Behold, my sons, Joseph my brother,

who was teaching the Book and the Discipline of Wisdom.<sup>54)</sup>

The expression "the Book and the Discipline of Wisdom" could

49) Cf. CHARLES, *op. cit.*, p. 134. For Noah cf. also the following passage: "And Noah wrote down those words in a book and gave it to Sem, his eldest son, and from this book the wise men among the former generations took copies, and they wrote books in a great number, every single man according to his tongue," Hebrew Book of Noah, cf. CHARLES in his edition p. 179 where the Hebrew text is reprinted.

50) Cf. CHARLES, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, London 1908, Index II.

51) Cf. CHARLES, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, pp. XLVI-LII.

52) Cf. *Ethiopic Book of Enoch* ch. CVI 1-2.

53) CHARLES, *The Greek Versions*, p. 255: 88 gives the following text (where I have introduced the emendation אליפו proposed by PASS and accepted by CHARLES):

וכען בני ספר מוסר חוכמה אליפו  
ותהוי חוכמתא עמכון ליקר עלם

The word "discipline", מוסר, corresponds to παιδεία, cf. Prov. XV 33, where we have חוכמה מוסר, the words quoted in our passage, in LXX παιδεία καὶ σοφία.

54) The text runs as follows: חזו בני ליוסף אחי

דמאלפא ספר ומוסר חכמה

be understood as a hendiadyoin; the Book which is the Discipline of Wisdom.

We note that this instruction from the Book of the Discipline of Wisdom is reminiscent of the instruction, given in the Qumran community from the Book of Meditation. And it should be noticed already here that this learning from books is referred to also when the Book of Enoch is concerned.

For I have seen it inscribed in the writing of Enoch.

Test. Simeon V 4.

As is contained in the book of Enoch the righteous.

Test. Levi X 5.

And now, my children, I have *learnt* from the writing of Enoch.

Test. Levi XIV 1.

The Greek expression here used is ἐγνων ἀπὸ γραφῆς Ἐνώχ. It is hardly any question of "learning" in the strict technical sense of the word.

For I have also read in the books of Enoch the righteous.

Test. Judah XVIII 1 (Test. Dan V 6;

Test. Naphtali IV 1;

That book may also be called the book of the words of Enoch, cf. Test. Benjamin IX 1 (ms *d*):

For I have learnt from the book of the words of Enoch the righteous.

It is entirely in keeping with what we have seen that the Testaments emphasize the teaching of reading in order that everybody may be able to read the Law, Test. Levi XIII 2: 55)

And do you also teach your children letters,  
that they may have understanding all their life,  
Reading unceasingly the Law of God.

And the Test. Reuben IV 1 puts forward the exhortation to devote the time to good works and study, γράμματα:

And expend labour on good works and on study.

That the Qumran community put the same emphasis on the instruction from writings, the teaching from a book, we have already been able to ascertain.

8. Dr GERHARDSSON has very carefully examined the Hebrew ter-

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55) Cf. the text in CHARLES, *The Text of the Twelve Patriarchs*, p. 53.



minology of transmission in Rabbinical circles, but he has hardly devoted any attention at all to the corresponding Aramaic expressions. Some such expressions are however found in non-rabbinical texts connected with or emanating from the Qumran-community in so far as they are accessible in Aramaic language — which, pending the publication of all the Aramaic fragments of apocryphal writings, is — for the present — the case to a very small extent. Nevertheless we are able to cull some Aramaic terms from e.g. the fragments of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. (Bodleian Fragments, Charles, *The Greek Versions*, pp. 246 ff.). Here Isaac teaches Levi the law of the priesthood (corresponding to Test. Levi IX 6 ff.):

Aramaic expressions:	Greek correspondances:
אמר, ʾamar = to say	λέγω
שמע, šema <sup>c</sup> = to hear, listen	ἀκούω
אלף, ʾallef = to teach	διδάσκω
ילף, iʿlaf = to learn, inf. למאלף	(γνώσεται, Test Levi XIII 3)
פקד, p <sup>c</sup> qad = to prescribe, charge (cf. Matth. I 24)	ἐντέλλομαι
פקוד, piqqūd = commandment	ἐντολή
גלי, galli = to reveal (cf. Matth. XVI 17)	ἀναγγέλλω (ἀνήγγειλα, Test. Levi VIII 19)
טמר, ʿemar = to hide, conceal (cf. Matth. XIII 33 Pesh.)	κρύπτω (ἐκρύψα, Test. Levi VIII 19)
אחזי, aḥzī = to show	ἀναγγέλλω

If we now pass to Christian terminology as it has been preserved in Gospel tradition we are of course confronted with the difficulty that we meet there with an original Aramaic-Jewish tradition which has lost its proper language and meets us — partly misunderstood — as written down in the Greek language. However, it is well known that the original Aramaic is often easily discernable behind the sometimes rather Semitic Greek. We do not lack the means either to reconstruct the original wording of the Gospel tradition. Here the old Syriac translations render good service, especially if compared to the Galilaean Aramaic dialect and the Aramaic found in the so-called Christian — Palestinian documents. Such a work of reconstruction has been going

on since the beginning of this century and the achievements of some generations of scholars, carefully sifted and supplemented, are accessible in BLACK, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospel*. (1954), a book lacking in the bibliography of the author. Among the many scholars who made signal contributions to the reconstruction of the original wording of the Aramaic Gospeltradition. I should like to mention especially WELLHAUSEN, BURNEY, TORREY and WENSINCK.

The last mentioned scholar drew attention to a more technical meaning of the verb  $\alpha\chi\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu$  in the gospels. As WENSINCK pointed out, this verb  $\alpha\chi\omicron\upsilon\epsilon\iota\nu$  corresponds to the Talmudic use of  $\check{s}^e ma^c$ , i.e. to receive a  $\check{s}^e ma^c t^e t\bar{a}$ , a learned tradition. There are several passages in the gospels quite well illustrating this usage.

In the Gospel of John — the Aramaic background of which was brilliantly advocated by BURNEY some 40 years ago — <sup>56)</sup> we read e.g. in Ch. V 30: <sup>57)</sup>

I can of my own mind do nothing,  
but as I have heard, I judge,  
and my judgement is just.

“As I have heard”, that means in this context, as I have received as an authoritative tradition.

We find, by the way, in the same speech of Jesus also the use of “to testify” and “the testimony” which belongs to the technical language of the Jewish traditionists (and to which we shall return in the following. <sup>58)</sup> We pass next to Ch. VI 45: <sup>59)</sup>

It is written in the Prophet:  
“They shall be all the disciples of God.”  
Everyone that hath heard from the Father  
and learned of him,  
cometh unto me.

The chapter VIII in John has a series of such passages, vv. 26, (38), 40, 47.

I do not quote these passages here but pass on to Ch. XII 34: <sup>60)</sup>

<sup>56)</sup> Cf. BURNEY, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (1922).

<sup>57)</sup> Cf. BLACK, *An Aramaic Approach*, p. 235.

<sup>58)</sup> Cf. below p. 76 n. 102.

<sup>59)</sup> Cf. BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

<sup>60)</sup> Cf. BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

And some people in the crowd answered him:

"We have heard out of the Law that Messiah abideth for ever."

The technical meaning of the verb "hear" is especially conspicuous in this passage, the people being instructed from the Law by oral teaching. <sup>61)</sup>

In this passage moreover it calls for notice that the word for "law", ܐܪܐܝܬܐ, belongs to Western Aramaic, not to Syriac (Eastern Aramaic). Even the vocalization was left in its Western Aramaic type. <sup>62)</sup> This is one of the details in the language of the Old Syriac gospels which demonstrate the influence of Western Aramaic in their language. <sup>63)</sup>

Jesus accordingly emphasizes to his "outer circle" of pupils carefully after his speech addresses them in the following words:

Pay heed to what ye have heard!

Jesus accordingly emphasizes to his "outer circle" of pupils carefully to pay attention to what they have received from him as an oral instruction.

It is but natural that the so called "Sermon on the Mount" should include some passages relevant in this connection. Thus the gospel of Matthew Ch. V vv. 21, 27, 33 are of considerable importance to our thema.

These three passages are all of them introduced in the same manner: <sup>64)</sup>

Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time:

But *I* say unto you.

Against the authority of the Law as represented in the teachings which his disciples have received by means of oral instruction — they have "heard" — Jesus puts his own authority which he bases on direct revelation from God, his heavenly Father, <sup>65)</sup> cf. the famous passage

61) Accordingly the formula "I have heard" contrary to what Dr. GERHARDSSON says *op. cit.*, p. 133 does not indicate that the quoted tradition cannot be found in a written text, cf. further what is said below p. 81 on the manner in which the Scripture is quoted.

62) Cf. BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 217. It was pointed out by SCHULTHESS, *ZfA* XIX/1905, pp. 132 ff. that some Palestinian-Jewish technical expressions were preserved in the Syriac translations.

63) Cf. BLACK, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-221.

64) Cf. BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

65) Cf. NORDEN, *Agnostos Theos*, 2nd ed. (1929), pp. 277-308. KLOSTERMANN, *Das Matthäus-Evangelium* (1927), p. 101 f. is hardly right in his analysis.

in Matth. XI 25-27, a passage which has now received such a striking illustration from the Hōdāyōt among the Dead Sea scrolls. <sup>66)</sup> Here we meet with the terms “to reveal” and “to hide”, “to conceal”, *gallī* and *ṭemar*, or corresponding terms. <sup>67)</sup>

These passages at least and their interpretation in the light of oral teaching and transmission should have been taken up for discussion by Dr. GERHARDSSON. Actually none of them found its way into his book.

We pass to the verb *διδάσκειν* on which I should like to make a few remarks.

We have already met with Jesus as a teacher, surrounded by a group of pupils, partly an inner circle, the twelve, partly an outer circle, “the many”, οἱ πολλοί both groups possessing their significant correspondances in the Qumrān community. <sup>68)</sup> The Gospel tradition shows Jesus also as a teacher, *διδάσκαλος* appearing as it were as a new Moses. His teaching in the synagogue, moreover, links him up with a certain royal and Messianic heritage as I have shown in another connection. <sup>69)</sup>

Here I should like to draw attention to Jesus as a teacher of *halākā*. It is quite obvious that because the ordinary language of Jesus and the first Christian community, the Church of Jerusalem, has been Aramaic, and especially Galilean Aramaic, we have to look for Aramaic terms. We should above all try to find the Aramaic terminology behind the Greek expressions. It is incontestable that we are rather bad off when it comes to a comparison with Aramaic-Jewish technical terms, as far

66) Cf. WIDENGREN, *Kungar, Profeter och Harlekiner* (1961), pp. 53-58.

67) Cf. our survey of Aramaic terms in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, above p. 61. The Syriac versions here have *kesā* and *gelā*. The Palestinian Aramaic version unfortunately is lacking in this passage, but as the verb *ṭemar* is used elsewhere where the Syriac versions have *kesā* as opposed to *gelā* it is quite possible that the verb *ṭemar* was used in the passage in question, cf. e.g. Luc VIII 17. We should further compare COWLEY, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, I, p. 16 last l., p. 21 l. 21 where *kasiātā* and *galiātā* are contrasted.

In the DS-scrolls we find the two opposite terms נסתרות and גלות, cf. the quotations and the discussions in BETZ, *Offenbarung und Schriftforschung in der Qumransekte* (1960), pp. 6-18. From Jer Aboda Zara II 7 we have an instructive illustration (here כבש, hide, and גלה, reveal), quoted in GERHARDSSON, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

68) Cf. WIDENGREN, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-53.

69) Cf. WIDENGREN, *JSS* II/1957, pp. 1-32, esp. pp. 29-32.

as the transmission of the *halāḳā* and halachic disputes are concerned. Hebrew was the language used above all in the Rabbinical houses of learning and schools, Aramaic chiefly reserved for ordinary usage, even if the new documents found in the Judean desert have taught us that on the whole Hebrew was much more used in daily life and in correspondance than was presumed up to now.<sup>70)</sup> At any rate, however, it is clear that Aramaic must have been the dominating language among uneducated or non-learned people — chiefly in Galilaea: the language of Jesus was certainly *above all* Aramaic, not Hebrew, even if a certain knowledge of Hebrew must be supposed — we remember his appearance as a reader in the synagogue service, Luke IV 16 ff.

Now it is quite obvious that even in the present Greek language of the gospels we have unmistakable proofs of an Aramaic tradition also in the relations of the disputes of Jesus on halachic questions with his opponents, the Pharisees, the scribes, and the lawyers.

We may take such a characteristic dispute as that related in Luke XIV 1-6, where a Sabbath *halāḳā* is debated.<sup>71)</sup> Here the Gospel tradition obviously relies on an Aramaic tradition making it probable that Jesus in his address to his adversaries actually used Aramaic (in v. 5):

Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit,  
and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

If we retrovert this saying into Aramaic we get something like the following (cf. BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 126 f.):

מִן הוּא מִנְכֹּן דְּנִפְל לֵה  
בְּרָא אֵי בְעִירָא לְבִירָא

BLACK has made it extremely probable that there is a pun to be found here in the words *b'ērā*, *b<sup>c</sup>īrā*, and *bērā*. For this reason we must ask: what evidence do we possess for a *halāḳā* in Aramaic language at the time of the appearance of Jesus?

As was shortly stated above the evidence is scarce, nevertheless there is sufficient material to show that halachic terms in Aramaic existed, that there was a juridical technical language also in Aramaic,

<sup>70)</sup> I think above all of the newly found correspondance of Bar Koseba, for which cf. BENOIT, MILIK, DE VAUX, *Les grottes de Murabba'at* (1961), No. 43-44, pp. 159-163, and above all for the latest finds YADIN, *Israel Exploration Journal* 11/1961, pp. 40 ff.

<sup>71)</sup> Cf. KLOSTERMANN, *Das Lukas-Evangelium* (1929), p. 148 f.

and that accordingly halachic discussions really could be carried out in Aramaic.

First as to the juridical documents. In view of the halachic statement of Jesus Matth. V 31; Marc X 4 it is interesting to note the existence of a document of divorce written in Aramaic, among the texts found in the Judaean desert and published in BARTHÉLEMY-MILIK, *Qumran Cave II*, pp. 104 ff. We were in possession of the actual wording of such an Aramaic document, *gittā gəṭ piṭṭūrīn*, to be reconstructed from quotations in Talmud, b. Gitt. 85 b, and in Maimonides' writings, Hilk. Gerushim 4. But it goes without saying what an extremely importance — as far as the problem of authenticity is concerned — the actual find of such a document really has. When Jesus speaks of "a writing of divorcement" it must be such an Aramaic *gittā* that is in his mind. <sup>72)</sup>

It is no doubt that the Book of the Jubilees presents some very old halachic, non rabbinical material, especially as far as the calendar is concerned, a problem which thanks to the researches above all of Mlle JAUBERT has acquired an all-important place in the discussions of the chronology of the last days of Jesus. <sup>73)</sup> There is the possibility that Jesus and his disciples followed the same festival calendar as the Book of Jubilees. <sup>74)</sup> The original language of this book is, however hardly open to question and it cannot be doubted that there was originally a Hebrew version of it, because fragments in Hebrew have turned up among the Dead Sea Scrolls. <sup>75)</sup> It is quite obvious that in this case the original language was Hebrew. <sup>76)</sup> This text therefore cannot be

<sup>72)</sup> Cf. KLOSTERMANN, *Das Markus-Evangelium* 3rd ed. (1936), p. 99 (no Aramaic background) and for the Jewish background STRACK-BILLERBECK, II, pp. 303-312.

<sup>73)</sup> Cf. JAUBERT, *La date de la cène* (1957). FINKELSTEIN, *HThR* 16/1923, pp. 39-61 has compared the special *halākā* of the Book of Jubilees with that of the Rabbis, not only as far as the calendar is concerned but also with reference to the Sabbath, the other Festivals, the Tithes, Laws of Sacrifice etc. Already at that time he was able to ascertain that the Book of Jubilees gives us an insight into a special Jewish sect, with a *halākā* of its own. For this problem cf. further ALBECK, *Das Buch der Jubiläen und die Halaka*, 27. *Ber. d. Hochschule f. d. Wiss. d. Judentums* (1930).

<sup>74)</sup> Cf. JAUBERT, *op. cit.*, pp. 00 ff., and further *VT* III/1953, pp. 250-264; *VT* VII/1957, pp. 35-61 as well as MORGENSTERN, *VT* V/1955, pp. 34-76, esp. pp. For general correspondances between the Book of Jubilees and DS scrolls cf. BROWNLEE, *BASOR* 123/1951, pp. 30-32.

<sup>75)</sup> Cf. DUPONT-SOMMER, *op. cit.*, p. 310 f.

<sup>76)</sup> Cf. the discussion in CHARLES, *The Ethiopic Version of the Hebrew Book*

used for the reconstruction, but it shows that the group behind this book possessed their own *halākā*.

We know also of fragments of the Palestinian Pentateuchtargum (Fragment A. Exodus XXI-XXII), not later than the first Century B.C., published by KAHLE in his *Masoreten des Westens* II, containing halachic material.<sup>77)</sup> If this material is compared with the regulations of the codified Mishnah it is said that it must be held to be pre-mishnaic, possibly pre-Christian.<sup>78)</sup> On this point however, I have no personal judgement to pass. What is important to me is the fact that this halachic material exists in Aramaic language. This is further in keeping with one other fact that mostly would seem to be neglected, at any rate has Dr. GERHARDSSON not attached any weight to it, namely the once existence also in Rabbinical circles of a *halākā*-tradition in Aramaic. BACHER in his *Tradition und Tradenten* (p. 16) once drew attention to the rather astonishing fact that Jose b. Joezer from Zerada testified to three halachic sentences in Aramaic, Eduyoth 8, 14.<sup>79)</sup>

Summing up, I think we are entitled to say that all the facts adduced make it perfectly clear that at the time of Jesus there was existant, above all probably in non-Rabbinical circles, but to a certain extent also among the Rabbis themselves, a *halākā* in Aramaic language. This being so we should try to regain the original Aramaic terms from the Greek terms used in Gospel tradition about halachic discussions between Jesus and his adversaries.

The gospel tradition mentions ἡ παράδοσις τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, Matt. XV 2; Mark VII 3, 5 in the disputation between Jesus and the Pharisees and scribes concerning the transgression of the *māsōrat hazzēqēnīm* committed by the disciples of Jesus, eating bread with unwashen hands.

No doubt as Dr. GERHARDSSON says—following previous commentators—the Greek-speaking synagogue as well as the Greek-speaking early church used the Greek expression to denote exactly מסורת הזקנים.<sup>80)</sup> The

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of *Jubilees*, p. IX f. and *The Book of Jubilees*, transl., pp. XXXI-XXXIII. It should be noted that the newly found fragments from Qumran are in Hebrew.

77) Cf. the texts in KAHLE, *op. cit.*, p. 3\* f.

78) Cf. BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 20. Many competent scholars (e.g. Dr. TEICHER in a private conversation) however, are highly sceptical about this conclusion.

79) Cf. the text Eduyoth 8, 14:

80) Cf. GERHARDSSON, *op. cit.*, p. 288. Cf. further *ThWb* II, 174 s.v. παράδοσις and STRACK-BILLERBECK, I, p. 691 f.

verb παραδιδόναι corresponds to the Hebrew verb מסר, cf. Mark VII 13, as does the verb παραλαμβάνειν to the קבל of the oral Tōrāh as tradition, cf. Mark VII 4 (*op. cit.*, p. 255).<sup>81)</sup>

The question is now: what terms are used in the Syriac translations, and have these terms some relevance for the question of the technical language used by the Aramaic-speaking Jesus, by his first group of disciples as well as by the oldest church in Jerusalem? As the author as usual has neglected this question we may briefly investigate this matter here.

The Evangelion daMefarrēšē in this case curiously enough has the expression *puqdānā d'sābīn*.<sup>82)</sup> The word *puqdānā* properly denotes "commandment" and therefore corresponds to the Aramaic word *piq-qūḏ* which we found in the Aramaic fragments of the Test. of the Twelve Patriarchs as the correspondance of the Greek ἐντολή. This term *puqdānā* accordingly does *not* render παράδοσις and it is quite obvious that the Syriac translation goes back to another text tradition.<sup>83)</sup>

Peshittā on the other hand has *mašlemānūtā d'qaššīšē*. Now *qaššīšā* certainly means πρεσβύτερος, but chiefly in the hierarchic sense of the word which it acquired in the Christian church, as denoting a priestly function below the bishop and above the deacon.<sup>84)</sup> It is highly to be doubted that such a term could have been used originally as an Aramaic correspondance of קהן. Instead it is more acceptable

81) Cf. for παραλαμβάνειν and παράδοσις in Hellenistic literature DIETERICH, *op. cit.*, p. 53 f. with n. 4; NORDEN, *Agnostos Theos*, pp. 288-290, where we also find a reference to the usage of Paul as is also the case in REITZENSTEIN, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, I. ed. (1910), p. 50 f. (but without reference to the technical terms. For the Jewish background behind παραλαμβάνω cf. *ThWb* IV, 11-15 s.v.

Not only in Hellenistic and Jewish literature but also in Pahlavi texts we meet with a corresponding use of *āburtan*, "to bring", and *patgriftan*, "to receive", but this terminology has thus far not been investigated in a satisfactory way.

82) This reading is found in Cur.

83) The word *puqdānē* (in plural) would seem to correspond to the ἐντολαί (τῶν πρεσβυτέρων), for in Pesh Ps. CXI 1 it translates ἐντολαί = מצות. The *puqdānē d'sābīn* accordingly corresponds to the מצות הזקנים. The Palestinian Aramaic expression for ἐντολαί certainly was *peqqūḏē*, cf. Matth. V 19.

84) Cf. *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II, 3766, 5). It must be admitted on the other hand that *qaššīšā* is used of the Jewish *presbyteroi* in many passages in the Evangelion daMefarrēšē, cf. the same entry in *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II, 3766, 4).



to presume that the word in question used for πρεσβύτεροι was *sābīn* which we find in Ev. daMefarrēšē.<sup>85)</sup>

The word *mašlēmānūtā*, from the verb in ʔaf<sup>el</sup> *ʔašlem*, renders, however, quite well the Greek παράδοσις, *ʔašlem* corresponding to παραδιδόναι.<sup>86)</sup>

Now we actually possess a Rabbinic term *ʔašlæmtā* “die massoretische Bezeichnung der prophetischen Bücher, gleichbedeutend mit קבלת”, as BACHER has stated (*op. cit.*, p. 21). This fact would speak in favour of the presumption that παράδοσις renders an original Aramaic term *ʔāšlæmtā* (or another nominal form from *ʔašlem*, the ʔaf<sup>el</sup> of the verb).

This conclusion is, however, valid only for the rabbinical terminology in Babylonia, for Palestinian Aramaic used other expressions for “transmit” and “tradition”, i.e. the verb *m<sup>e</sup>sar* and the noun *massōrtā*, tradition, used both in Galilean Aramaic and in Christian Palestinian Aramaic. Unfortunately some of the decisive passages in the Christian Palestinian translation of the New Testament are lacking among the regained parts of this version, but reference may be made to such passages as Luc I 2, Coloss. II 8, and II Tim. II 2.<sup>87)</sup>

In Galilean Aramaic we meet in the stories of the rabbis with the same verb and noun, whereas the ʔaf<sup>el</sup> of *šlm* and its derivative nouns are entirely lacking both here and in the Christian Palestinian dialect in the sense of “transmit” and “tradition”.<sup>88)</sup>

85) Cf. Matth. XV 2 in Cur., cf. *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II, 2491. Cf. further in the O.T. Pesh. such passages as Num. XI 16 and Ruth IV 2, both passages *sābē* as a translation of Hebrew וְקָנִים. In Palestinian Aramaic as terms corresponding to πρεσβύτερος we find both *sābā* and *qaššīšā*, cf. Acts XXV 16 *qaššīsaikhōn deḡūdāiē*. But here we also have to reckon with the influence of the Syriac versions.

86) Cf. such passages as indicated in *Thesaurus Syriacus*, II, 4193, 3). Interesting is the expression used of oral tradition *par excellence*, *mašlēmānūtā demen pumā lefumā*. There can be no doubt that in Edessene Syriac this was the typical expression for the oral παράδοσις.

87) The passage Col. II 8, where we find the term ܡܫܪܝܬܐ, is perhaps the most profitable from our point of view.

88) An illustrative passage is found Jer Yoma III 7, 40 where a rabbi promises to transmit “the Name” (i.e. the Holy Name of God). Here the verb מִסֵּר is used.

For παράδοσις, as corresponding to the Hebrew term מִסְרָה cf. STRACK-BILLERBECK, I, pp. 691 ff.

The conclusion must be then, that the Greek *παροδιδόναι* renders Aramaic *m<sup>e</sup>sar* while *παράδοσις* translates *massōrtā*.

9. Jesus as a teacher in the centre of his inner circle of disciples was not only a teacher of the *halākā*, the exposition and interpretation of the Law. He also acted as the spiritual guide of his disciples in their prayers to God. Luke XI 1 ff. tells us the story how Jesus taught his apostles the Lord's prayer: One of his disciples said to him:

Master, teach us to pray,  
as also John taught his disciples.

We get here also the welcome knowledge that John the Baptist taught *his* disciples to pray. Jesus, who according to gospel tradition (the Sermon on the Mount. parr.) has detailed instructions to give as to the manner of praying, follows in the steps of his as it were predecessor, John the Baptist, when he provides his disciples with a prayer of his to be their own. It would seem that in doing so he only acts in accordance with an already established custom in Rabbinical circles. It is related of R. Eliezer's admittance to the circle of disciples belonging to Joḥannan b. Zakkai, that Joḥannan first of all taught him the elementary things: *šema<sup>c</sup>*, *tefillāh*, and *birkat māzōn*, this according to Aboth R. Nathan 30. SCHLATTER in his monograph on Joḥannan b. Zakkai has pointed out the implication of this custom when saying: "Auch hier erscheint die Liturgie, durch die das Leben Tag um Tag geheiligt wird, als das erste was der Jünger empfängt. Sodann lehrt er ihn täglich zwei Halachoth, die Elieser am Sabbath repetiert" (SCHLATTER, *op. cit.*, p. 23).

It is obviously the regular practice that the Master instructed, "taught" his circle of disciples both their prayer and *halākā*.

It has been pointed out by BLACK (*op. cit.*, p. 21) that the transcription *ραββουνί, ραββουνεί*, Mark X 51: John XX 16, exactly agrees with the vocalization given to this Aramaic word for "my Lord" in the Targum fragments published by KAHLE in his *Masoreten des Westens*, II. In D, Gen XLIV 18 it is fully vocalized as *רַבּוּנִי* whereas the Onkelos Targum has *רַבּוּנִי* (cf. SPERBER, I, p. 77).

Jesus as the *διδάσκαλος*, the master in the centre of his groups of disciples, is accordingly addressed with a word which in the gospel tradition receives its correct Palestinian pronunciation, as is demon-

strated by the agreement between gospel transcription and Targum vocalization in the Palestinian Pentateuch fragments.<sup>89)</sup>

10. The author when speaking of what he calls "The Narrative Tradition" (pp. 181 ff.) puts forward a statement which cannot be accepted without qualification: "Disinterested historiography is a late concept in history" (p. 182).<sup>90)</sup> In this general and apodictic form the statement is obviously false, because it doesn't take into account all disinterested, quite objective history actually written in Antiquity, both in Jewish and in Greek-Roman civilization.<sup>91)</sup>

When Dr. GERHARDSSON then proceeds to state that the most outstanding teachers occupied an authoritative position, incarnating as it were "the perfect tradition from the fathers, from Sinai and from God", and that "that is why their words and deeds were of such interest" he is obviously right. The comparison is then given by him with the disciples of Jesus who collected what they knew of their master's deeds and words.<sup>92)</sup> This, however, is not at all any new insight, for SCHLATTER had already in 1899 pointed out the formal agreement between the "deeds", מעשים, and "words", sayings, of a rabbi and the gospel tradition.<sup>93)</sup> K. L. SCHMIDT quoted this statement of SCHLATTER's in his contribution to the Gunkel-Festschrift where in a very interesting and even to-day highly valuable way he analyzed the literary character of the Gospels.<sup>94)</sup> Neither SCHLATTER nor SCHMIDT is quoted by the author. We remember the Testament of Benjamin

89) This circumstance once more underlines the fact that the language used by the disciples as well as by Jesus himself was Aramaic, chiefly the Galilean dialect. It also shows that the Palestinian Aramaic must be made our starting point for every reconstruction of the original wording of the gospel tradition.

90) We cannot call tradition-literature "historiography" in the proper meaning of the word because the motivation for its origin and growth is not at all "history" in the meaning the word *ιστορία* has in Greek literature.

91) For early Greek history writing cf. E. MEYER, *Thukydides und die Entstehung der wissenschaftlichen Geschichtsschreibung* (1913) and for the disinterested early history writing in Israel cf. E. MEYER, *Die kulturelle, literarische und religiöse Entwicklung des israelitischen Volkes in der älteren Königszeit* (1930), esp. p. 67 f.

92) Cf. GERHARDSSON, *op. cit.*, p. 182 f. and the literature quoted there.

93) Cf. SCHLATTER, *Jochanan Ben Zakkai* (1899), p. 8.

94) Cf. SCHMIDT, *Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte, Eucharisterion* — Festschr. Gunkel (1923), II, pp. 50-134. He quotes SCHLATTER, p. 66. The chief fault with SCHMIDT is that he operates rather mechanically with an anonymous mass, "the people", as the carrier of traditions.

where it was spoken of "his work and his word" XI v (section 7).

II. In order to investigate the delivery of the gospel tradition in early Christianity Dr. GERHARDSSON analyses what the Post-Apostolic church has to say on this subject. He *inter alia* turns to a famous passage from Irenaeus, where as he rightly emphasizes, "we are dealing with a regular teaching situation" (p. 204). He only forgets to credit BOUSSET for having more than other scholars drawn attention to and analyzed this passage in his immensely important book *Jüdisch-Christlicher Schulbetrieb in Alexandria und Rom*, a fundamental work in connection with our problems.<sup>95</sup>)

"Irenaeus relates", says the author' "that he carries in his memory many traditions which he received in his childhood from Polycarp", and then quotes a highly illuminating passage.

"I can, even name the place where the blessed Polycarp sat and taught, where he went out and in. I remember his way of life, what he looked like, the addresses he delivered to the people, how he told, ἀπήγγελε, of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord, how he remembered their words and what he had heard from them about the Lord, about his miracles, and about his teaching, τῆς διδασκαλίας. As one who had received this from eyewitnesses of the word of life Polycarp retold everything in accordance with the Scriptures. I listened to this then, because of the grace of God which was given me, carefully, copying it down, not on paper, but in my heart, ὑπομνηματιζόμενος αὐτὰ οὐκ ἐν χαρτῇ ἀλλ' ἐν ἐμῇ καρδίᾳ. And I repeat it constantly in genuine form by the grace of God," Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V 20.

The author of course — and he is quite right — considers this passage a cardinal one for his thesis. He notes first of all that "the tradition is linked with authoritative spokesmen" and emphasizes the agreement with Rabbinical circles as he has depicted the transmission in the preceding part of his thesis (pp. 131 n. 1 and 171 ff.). Irenaeus when quoting a tradition is careful to give a chain of reliable traditionists (p. 204 f.).

Secondly the author stresses the fact that "Irenaeus claims to have

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95) BOUSSET, *op. cit.*, 314 f. drew attention to the passage in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* V 20, 6 (ed. SCHWARTZ editio minor, p. 207 f.) Why does Dr. Gerhardsson quote from MIGNE, PG?

learned the tradition by heart." He also notes, however, that "in accordance with his formulation", we have to "reckon with the fact that it was not unusual to support the memory by the taking of written notes". (p. 205).

Had the author been less dominated by his preconceived idea of the all-dominating role of oral tradition he would certainly have studied BOUSSET's pioneer work more carefully. As it now is he rejects in another connection BOUSSET's general views on "the way in which Philo quotes the school tradition" (p. 199), saying that he "underestimates the role of memorization and places too much emphasis on written notes" (p. 199 n. 3). This is a highly exaggerated view, for BOUSSET is very balanced, stating that Philo relied on "teils mündliche Überlieferungen teils schriftliche Aufzeichnungen aus der Schule" (*op. cit.*, p. 44). Taking into account what we know this seems quite a reasonable opinion.

The author has moreover not observed that BOUSSET thanks to his careful analyses of some relevant passages has demonstrated in an unrefutable manner that Irenaeus actually claims more than he can stand for. At least one of the discourses of Polycarp he has preserved not only ἐν καρδίᾳ but also ἐν χάριτι, namely adv. Haereses IV 27-32 1. Here such passages as adv. Haereses IV 27. 1; IV 31. 1; IV 32. 1 speak a clear language which cannot be misunderstood, as some quotations will show (cf. BOUSSET, *op. cit.*, pp. 272 ff.).<sup>96)</sup>

Irenaeus refers constantly in these passages to the exposition and teaching of his teacher, the presbyter.

*Quemadmodum audiivi a quodam presbytero, qui audierat ab his qui Apostolos viderant, et ab his qui didicerant.* IV 27. 1.

"As I have heard from a certain presbyter, who had heard it from these who had seen the apostles, and from those who had been their disciples.

*presbyter reficiebat nos et dicebat*

IV 31. 1.

"When recounting certain matters of this kind respecting them of

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96) It is difficult to understand why Dr. Gerhardsson has missed this point but probably his attention was exclusively focussed on oral tradition, so that he entirely left out of consideration the other possibility — written sources.

old time, the presbyter was in the habit of instructing us, and saying:"

*huius modi quoque de duobus testamentis senior,  
apostolorum discipulus, disputabat.*

IV 32. 1.

"After this fashion also did the presbyter, a disciple of the apostles, reason with respect to the two testaments," Transl. ROBERTS-RAMBAUT.

The misfortune which has occurred to the author in the interpretation of the passage from Irenaeus should make us rather careful not to accept other statements of his concerning other early church authorities and their methods of recording. So *e.g.* when he contends (p. 206) that Papias "not copied down the traditions concerning Christ" which he used to search for in the words of the elders, *πρεσβύτεροι*, but "learned them carefully, impressed them upon his memory", *καλῶς ἔμαθον καὶ καλῶς ἐμνημόνευσα*, as the actual words of Papias are. But Papias in the preceding sentence has said, according to the quotation given by Dr. GERHARDSSON himself, that "he relied less in principle upon the written word", *τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων*, "than upon that which came from the living and abiding voice, *τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης*", Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III 39. Now, to rely less in principle upon the written word than upon that which comes from the living voice cannot be said to be the same thing as not to rely at all upon books, but *only* upon the living voice.

His actual words are worth quoting:

*οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων τοσοῦτόν με ὠφελεῖν ὑπελάμβανον, ὅσον  
τὰ παρὰ ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης.*

"For I did not suppose that information from books would help me *so much* as the word of a living and surviving voice," III 39, 4, Loeb. ed. p. 293.

The author is admittedly right when he says: "The fact that in later life he becomes responsible for five books is another matter". This is quite true, nevertheless it shows that Papias himself preferred people to rely in principle *more* upon books than upon memory.

I think we may safely conclude that in order to preserve the tradition written sources were relied upon to a far greater extent than Dr. GERHARDSSON wants us to believe.

The pretensions of Papias to have relied upon unwritten traditions

are moreover criticised by Eusebius who is not willing to take Papias' statements at their face value:

"The same writer adduces other accounts, as though they came to him from unwritten tradition, and some strange parables and teachings of the Saviour, and some other more mythical accounts... I suppose that he got these notions by a perverse reading of the apostolic accounts, not realising that they had spoken mystically and symbolically", III 39, 11-12.

καὶ ἄλλα δὲ ὁ αὐτὸς ὡς ἐκ παραδόσεως ἀγγάφου εἰς αὐτὸν ἤκοντα παρατίθεται, ξένας τε τινὰς παραβολὰς τοῦ σωτῆρος καὶ διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ τίνα ἄλλα μυστικώτερα... ἃ καὶ ἡγούμεαι τὰς ἀποστόλικας παρεκδεξάμενον διηγήσεις ὑπολαβεῖν, τὰ ἐν ὑποδείγμασι, πρὸς αὐτῶν μυστικῶς εἰρημένα μὴ συνεωρακότα.

12. If our arguments have been conducted along reasonable lines there should then, when it came to the recording of "the words and deeds" of Jesus, have been a very early process of writing down the various traditions as they circulated in the Aramaic language.

Before we enter upon a discussion of this possibility we should like to point out that quite apart from the traditions in Hebrew concerning the **דברים** and **מעשים** of a great Rabbi there was extant from very old times a pattern of this kind in the Aramaic, namely the collection of the deeds and words of the wise Ahiqar, preserved in the Elephantine papyri.<sup>97</sup>) In this case his life is first told, and then we have a collection of his famous sayings.

The problem of the existence of written Aramaic sources behind the gospel tradition has been a much discussed problem as is well known. This discussion has not led to any general agreement among scholars. In BLACK's book *An Aramaic Approach* we find, however, several passages quoted where it would seem inescapable to assume a *written* Aramaic tradition behind the present Greek text. As to presumable collections our thoughts go of course in the first instance to the so-called "Quelle", the "Q", a presumed collection chiefly of sayings

97) Cf. COWLEY, *The Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (1923), pp. 212-220. Here, however, the story of his life is told by Ahiqar himself, so that the whole collection — both deeds and words — is called **מלי אחיקר**, "the words of Ahiqar", cf. p. 212: 1.

of Jesus, used by Matthew and Luke, alongside with the material contained in Mark. We may quote in this connection some of the instances where a misunderstanding in the Greek text certainly indicates a written Aramaic source.

So *e.g.* we have Mark XIV 41 ἀπέχεσθαι which could be explained as רחיק, a wrong reading for דחיק (BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 161). Instead of "it is enough, the hour is come" read "the hour has come, the end is pressing" <sup>98</sup>) (BLACK's explanation).

Matth. XVI 16 דחיי instead of דמחי (BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 180). <sup>99</sup>)

Matth. XXIII 26 αἰσχρονομία corresponding to דכו, *dakkō*, whereas Luke XI 41 in the corresponding passage has δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, which puzzling disagreement in the same context could hardly be explained, except if there was in this case a reading זכו, *zakkō* as proposed already by WELLHAUSEN. (BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 2). <sup>100</sup>)

Luke XIX 17 f. כרכין instead of ככרין, "cities" instead of "talents" (BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 2 <sup>101</sup>) This suggestion comes from NESTLE.

John III 33 ἀλγής, which means that שרירה was read instead of שדריה, "sent him" (BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 110 f., BLACK's proposal).

He that hath received his testimony,  
hath confirmed (<sup>a</sup>*šar*) that God sent him.

Here we find again the important term "testimony". <sup>102</sup>)

<sup>98</sup>) The reconstructed text would then be אמת שעתא דחיקת אחריטא.

<sup>99</sup>) Cf. the reading of D: τοῦ Θεοῦ σωζοντος and accordingly σωζοντος = דמחי, who maketh alive, who saveth.

<sup>100</sup>) Cf. WELLHAUSEN, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, 2nd ed. (1911), p. 27.

<sup>101</sup>) The suggestion was originally made by NESTLE. It should be noted that *karḳā* is quite a usual term for town. However it seems to be more used in eastern than in western Aramaic.

<sup>102</sup>) This proposed reading, suggested by BLACK restores order into this otherwise rather confused section. For the important term "testimony" cf. ODEBERG *The Fourth Gospel* (1929), pp. 217-234; BULTMANN, *Das Evangelium des Johannes* (1950), pp. 198-200. The use of the word <sup>c</sup>*ēdūt* in O.T. writings and also in some apocryphal books should be investigated in this connection. I can more than ever uphold the interpretation, I have given at various occasions, of the term <sup>c</sup>*ēdūt* as denoting the written Law — this word taken in its widest meaning, cf. above p. 58 the quotation from the Book of Jubilees IV 17-18. For the terms here concerned we should also refer to BETZ, *op. cit.*, pp. 45 ff. Dr. GERHARDSSON, *op. cit.*, p. 183 f. has given some valuable viewpoints on the pupil as a "witness"



These passages should be contrasted with other instances where misunderstandings must have arisen already in the oral tradition *e.g.* Luke XXII 27 (BLACK, *op. cit.*, p. 165).

It should be observed in this connection that Luke has *not* faithfully recorded the transmitted tradition as Dr. GERHARDSSON contends (p. 209 f.).

In this case the survey provided by BLACK (*op. cit.*, pp. 271 ff.) is most illuminating. His conclusion seems quite inevitable. "In the light of such observations it is not possible to claim that the Lucan form of Q. is always the more faithful to the Aramaic original, though it is for the most part primitive translation of the Aramaic." (*op. cit.*, p. 273).

Codex Bezae reads:

<τίς γὰρ μείζων, ὁ ἀνακείμενος ἢ ὁ διακονῶν>  
 <ὁ διακονῶν> μᾶλλον ἢ ὁ ἀνακείμενος.  
 ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν ἦλθον οὐκ ὡς ὁ ἀνακείμενος ἀλλ' ὡς ὁ  
 διακονῶν,  
 καὶ ὑμεῖς ἡυξήθητε ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ μου ὡς ὁ διακονῶν.

BLACK, reading רביתן instead of רביתן = ἡυξήθητε, restores:

Which is the greater, the guest or the servant?

(D) Is the servant greater than the guest?

I came among you, not as guest, but as servant,

And ye have been the guests at table, while I served as servant.

In Aramaic:

מן רבא רבעא אי עבדא  
 מא עבדא יתיר מן רבעא  
 אנא אחית בינתכון לא כרבעא אלא כעבדא  
 ואתון רבעתון בעובדי כעבדא

13. *Matth. IV 23.* mentions two various kinds of the activity of Jesus: διδάσκειν and κηρύσσειν, teaching and preaching, the object of κηρύσσειν being τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. Both Ev. daMefarrēšē and the Palestinian Syriac Lectionary in this passage use the participle forms *mallef* and *makrez* from the verbs <sup>2</sup>*allef* and <sup>2</sup>*akrez*. To this

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of his teacher's words and actions in rabbinical. As far as I can see he has however paid no attention to the *written* testimony in the sense indicated here.

activity is added his healing of sickness.<sup>103</sup>) Acts I says: ἤρξατο ὁ Ἰησοῦς ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν. According to Luke IX 2 the disciples of Jesus receive two commissions: κηρύσσειν, preaching, and ἰᾶσθαι, healing. The Aramaic expressions behind the Greek are the same as in Matth. IV 23. This is the same activity as exercised by their Master, except for διδάσκειν. Turning to the Acts of the Apostles we find that in XVIII 24 f. there is a highly instructive notice:

But a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by family, an eloquent man, arrived at Ephesus, being effective in the Scriptures. He had been informed in the way of the Lord and was fervent in spirit, and he was speaking and teaching accurately the story of Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue.

and in v. 28 about his activity in Achaia:

he vigorously refuted the Jews, publicly proving from the Scripture that the Messia is Jesus.

Here we have the teaching, διδάσκειν τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, and the demonstration from the Scriptures, ἐπιδεικνύναι διὰ τῶν γραφῶν εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν.

In the oldest Christian community, the "Urgemeinde", demonstration from the Scriptures and accordingly interpretation of the Scriptures played a decisive rôle as far as Jesus and his position was concerned. There, a tradition based on the Jewish Scriptures and their interpretation was of the utmost importance.

In the Hellenistic communities the situation was quite another. They couldn't possibly care much for Jewish tradition, for the interpretation of the Scriptures of the Jews which they didn't recognize as Holy books. RENGSTORF has emphasized this cardinal point.<sup>104</sup>) I do not find that this basic difference— which of course is of fundamental importance for our views of the rôle of tradition — has been in any way articulated by the author.

103) For his activity as a physician and exorcist, Aramaic *āṣiā* (cf. the Mesopotamian *āṣū* < *A.ZU* in Sumerian) cf. OTTO, *Reich Gottes und Menschensohn*, 3rd ed. (1940), pp. 277-283.

104) "In einer Umgebung, die von der Schrift nichts wusste, wäre das διδάσκειν τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ ebenso am falschen Platze gewesen, wie es in der Urgemeinde und überall im Verkehr mit der Judenschaft am rechten Platze war", *ThWb*, II, s.v. διδάσκω p. 149.

Paul was staying in Rome, it is related in the Acts XXVIII 31: preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching the story of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here on the one hand we still have the teaching, about Jesus, διδάσκειν τὰ περὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ χριστου, and on the other hand the preaching of the Kingdom of God, κηρύσσειν τῇ βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, just as in the case of Jesus himself, Matth. IV 23, and his apostles, Luke IX 2.

14. A difficult problem is the question how we have to determine the extent of the authentic tradition handed down to Paul and transmitted by him to his congregations. Dr. GERHARDSSON is well aware of the difficulties associated with this and related questions and rightly says: "it is difficult for us to determine the outlines of the early Christian tradition as carried by Paul and his colleagues" (*op. cit.*, p. 291). However, when it comes to concrete statements the author might well have been somewhat more cautious. For when he argues "that, within the framework of the παράδοσις delivered by Paul and the authoritative διδασχὴ which he passed on, the core was provided by a corpus containing sayings of, and about Christ" (*op. cit.*, p. 295) he is following in the steps of some predecessors, but nevertheless he operates like them with many unknown factors. So *e.g.* he asserts that "Paul says clearly, time and again, that *he has already transmitted* the basic authoritative tradition to his congregations" (*op. cit.*, p. 291) and refers *inter alia* to I Cor. XI 2, 23; XV 1 ff. Now, some of these passages obviously hint at a gospel tradition, the others not. Such a passage as I Cor. XI 23 clearly quotes a gospel tradition about the Lord's Supper. In XV 1 ff. the Apostle reminds his brethren of the *evangelion* he has received and transmitted to them, namely "that Christ had died for our sins according to the Scriptures." But where do we find such a statement in the authentic gospel tradition? This statement clearly is a theological interpretation of the traditon.<sup>105</sup>) And moreover, having referred to Christ's death, resurrection, and the visions of him, Paul ends by stating that last of all he appeared to him, Paul (v. 8). Now, this is certainly to Paul a very important part of his *evangelion*, for on this fact he bases his own authority as an

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105) Cf. DAVIES, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

apostle, <sup>106</sup>) but it does not at all belong to *the gospel tradition*, it is a *παράδοσις* highly characteristic even of Paul. <sup>107</sup>)

Passing then to I Cor. XI 2 we should note that this passage obviously refers to what has still less to do with a gospel tradition, for in this case Paul doesn't even start from such a tradition. Here he gives praise to his congregation because they have faithfully kept his traditions, *παράδοσεις*. Then he proceeds to give them a special item of his teaching, his commandments about the woman's wearing an *ἐξουσία* because of the angels, in order not to "dishonour" herself (vv. 5-10). <sup>108</sup>) What is important in this case is the very fact that we meet here with a *παράδοσις* which has nothing to do with gospel tradition, but which is emphatically presented by Paul as one of his most weighty *παράδοσεις*, to be kept strictly.

It seems to me that Dr. GERHARDSSON has operated too mechanically here with the notion of "tradition". From a general point of view we have found that it is absolutely wrong to assume that all the *παράδοσεις* handed down by Paul to the congregations founded by him should go back to the traditions about Jesus and his apostles. No doubt this insight is shared also by Dr. GERHARDSSON — on principle. But why does he then give references to passages where Paul obviously also — or only — gives his own *παράδοσις*? How much Paul actually knew of Jesus, and how interested he was in *the man* Jesus, the Christ *κατὰ σάρκα*, we really don't know, and contrary to Dr. GERHARDSSON I cannot find

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106) Cf. REITZENSTEIN, *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, 3rd. ed. (1927), p. 77 f.: "Auf das A Schauen des Auferstandenen begründet er das Apostolat der Jünger wie das eigene, auf dieses Schauen seine Freiheit in der Lehre." Cf. further on this point Gal. I 11-12, on which see SCHLIER, *Der Brief an die Galater* 12th ed. (1962), pp. 44 ff. On the whole the book of REITZENSTEIN as far Paul is concerned is not so easily disposed of as some of his modern critics would have us believe. Actually Paul was not only a rabbi, converted to Christianity, and certainly not to a Christianity of the Jerusalem type.

107) Cf. LIETZMANN, *An die Korinther I. II*, 3rd ed. (1931), p. 77: "Pls gibt das Wissen der Urgemeinde und fügt sein eigenes Wissen hinzu." HERING, *La première épître de Saint Paul aux Corinthiens* (1949), p. 134 says that the tradition Paul has received probably ends already with v. 5. It is highly probable that this tradition was received from the church outside Jerusalem.

108) Cf. DAUBE, *op. cit.*, p. 301 f. on the notion of *nizwūl*, with a reference also to I Cor. XI 4 ff. DAVIES, in spite of the title of his book, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, has nothing to say on this passage, certainly one of the most characteristic of the *rabbinically* trained Paul, cf. also from this point of view all the material presented in STRACK-BILLERBECK, III, pp. 423-443.

that SCHOEPS is “unjustly” “ironical on the legitimate attempts to discover what Paul may have known about Jesus” (*op. cit.*, p. 291 n. 5).<sup>109</sup>) These attempts may be called “legitimate”, they are nevertheless doomed to fail, simply for the reason that our material is quite insufficient to answer our questions.

15. It is quite remarkable to observe how quotations from the Scriptures in one case are introduced by the formula “as it is said”, in Hebrew: **שנאמר**, but in another case by the formula “as it is written”, in Aramaic: **דכתיב**. A very good illustration is afforded in the well-known story about Jochanan ben Zakkai in the camp of Vespasian, Midrash Echa I 31. In that story there is first a quotation from Is. X 34 “Lebanon shall fall through a mighty man”, introduced by the formula **שנאמר**, followed some lines further on by a quotation from Prov. XV 30: “a good message makes the bone fat”, introduced by the formula **דכתיב**. Only a few sentences later we have a new quotation from Prov. XVII 22, introduced in the same manner.

In the story of Shim'on ben Shetach, Bereshit Rabba 91 we have a quotation from Ben Sira XI 1, introduced in the following way: “It is written in the Book of Ben Sira”, **דכתיב בספר בן סירא**, a quotation from Ecclesiastes VII 12 introduced by **דכתיב**, and finally Is. XXVI 20 is quoted after the introductory formula **דכתיב**. I should like to emphasize the fact that the same prophetic book — Isaiah — could be quoted after the introductory formula “as it is said”, **שנאמר**, as well as after the formula “as it is written”, **דכתיב**. Why Hebrew is used in one case and Aramaic in the other I cannot say.

The alternation between the two formulas — for which no rational explanation could possibly be found — to my mind shows that one was completely indifferent to whether one quoted the Scriptures as an *oral* or as a *written* teaching.

It is quite interesting to note how often the expression “as it is written”, **ככתיב**, or “it is written”, **כתוב**, returns in the DS-scrolls, actually so many times that references would seem to be necessary.

It is the liturgical use of Scripture that constitutes a link between

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109) Cf. SCHOEPS, *Paulus* (1959), p. 49 f. His exposition is based on the researches of an older generation and seems to me quite convincing. SCHOEPS of course refers to the famous saying II Cor. V 16 about Christ *κατὰ σάρκα*. BULTMANN, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (1953), p. 185 takes the same attitude.

oral and written tradition. The Scripture is recited in liturgical service — as it was while still only an oral tradition (in such cases where there really *was* a passage from oral to written tradition). From Samaritan sources we know that Baba the Great instructed the recitation of Law, **אלף מקרת ארהותא**. We have seen that the Jews knew the Tōrāh also as **מקרה** (cf. above p. 50). And yet to both Samaritans and Jews the holy tradition is essentially “Scripture”.

In Christian homilies it is emphasized that the gospel “says” so and so. To quote only an illustrative example from a Palestinian Aramaic text: “Hear the voice of the gospel, how it saith that ...”, **ܡܠܟܐ ܕܥܡܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ ܕܥܝܪܐ**, *Analecta Oxoniensia*, Semitic Ser. I, IX, p. 67 Col. II 7-9. Here too liturgical usage of course lies behind the expression.

On the other hand it is easy to find in Syriac literature many illustrations of the opposite attitude to which the holy word is essentially a *written word*. A more cursory reading of some Syriac homilies resulted in a few examples where the author (Aphrem) speaks of how it is *written* in Scripture, whereas he does not say that Scripture *says* so and so.

## CONCLUSIONS

The implications of these remarks would be that Dr. GERHARDSSON has underrated the role of written transmission both in Judaism and Early Christianity, chiefly because of his concentration on Rabbinic Judaism, while neglecting other movements, above all the Apocalyptic groups and the Qumrān community. The extent to which these two groups are identical is still unknown to us. He has misinterpreted some passages in Early Christian literature showing that written transmission was much more used than he assumes. He has not understood the importance which the notion of a new Heavenly Revelation in certain circles possessed for the methods of transmission, for the instruction from books, and for the utilisation of written sources when it came to the composition of new books. Though he admits the use of note books and private scrolls (p. 335) he has neglected the problem of written Aramaic sources. While making widest possible use of the Hebrew Rabbinical material he has left out the Aramaic language from his investigation. He has not taken any account of the fact that both

Jesus and his nearest disciples were Galileans, spoke a Galilean Aramaic dialect. His book therefore does not establish the historical connection between the Master and his disciples on the one hand and the circles from where they obviously came on the other hand. The supposition of the author that they came from "the main stream of Judaism; from that section of the people which looked to the learned Pharisees as its teachers and spiritual leaders" (p. 201) has not been in any way proved by him, takes no account of the fact that Jesus proceeded from the circle of John the Baptist and must have had some spiritual background both in the Apocalyptic group and the Qumran community. Jesus as well as the Apostles are seen nearly exclusively as teachers in the Rabbinic sense, their preaching, their *κηρύσσειν*, has been more or less neglected, and the apocalyptic and extatic character of the whole movement with its very strong eschatological accent left out of consideration. Both Jesus and Paul were Jews, they were both of them teachers, Paul more on the Rabbinic lines than Jesus, but they were also much more than that. The highly pneumatic character of the original Jerusalem church also has some importance for the subject of Dr. GERHARDSSON's thesis. The results of form-criticism do not seem to have to be too much changed, rather supplemented.

All in all: a valuable and highly instructive work which has to be corrected and supplemented in many more points than we have been able to do in this article.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

- BASOR = Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research  
HThR = Harvard Theological Review  
JBL = Journal of Biblical Literature  
JSS = Journal of Semitic Studies  
ThWb = Theologisches Wörterbuch  
VT = Vetus Testamentum  
ZAW = Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft  
ZfA = Zeitschrift für Assyriologie  
ZfThK = Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

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# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMA'S RELIGIOUS REFORMS

BY

EDNA M. HOOKER

„Quis procul ille autem ramis insignis  
oliuae sacra ferens?“<sup>1)</sup>

So Anchises greets the appearance of Numa Pompilius among the future kings of Roma, and no Roman would have failed to recognize him instantly, for to the Romans Numa was the father of their religion and their laws. But to-day his reputation and even his existence are less firmly established. Half a century ago Warde Fowler could still describe Numa as 'the king with whose name and personality the Romans always associated the redaction of the Fasti and the state-organization of their religion: a personality so clearly conceived by them as to bear witness at once to its own historical reality, and to their conviction of the vital importance of his work'.<sup>2)</sup> Since that time, however, doubts have increasingly been cast on the reliability of the traditions regarding Numa and his reforms, until we have now reached a stage in which the question is apparently regarded as no longer meriting discussion, and the latest major work on Roman religion<sup>3)</sup> disregards Numa entirely.

For this scepticism about Numa, and indeed about all the Roman kings, perhaps Livy was unwittingly to blame. When he referred to 'quae ante conditam condendamue urbem poeticis magis decora fabulis quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis traduntur'<sup>4)</sup>, he obviously referred only to the legends connected with Aeneas, Evander and Romulus; but recent historians have been quick to extend his cautions to the whole account of the monarchy, and all too many scholars

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1) Verg. *Aen.* 6.808-9.

2) W. Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic* (London, 1916), pp. 335-6.

3) K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* (München, 1960).

4) Liv., *Praef.* 6.

have been eager to carry the process further. There has been general agreement that the Romans really knew nothing about their early history. Most historians, following Mommsen's lead, have assured us that they deduced their early history from their later institutions. Students of religion have reduced it all to aetiological myths. Philhellenes have been encouraged to claim that all Roman traditions were invented by the Greeks; while other scholars, impressed by the spectacular archaeological finds in Etruria, have set out to prove that all Roman institutions were derived from the Etruscans. All this, of course, is gross exaggeration. Reconstructions and aetiological myths do appear in the traditional history of the monarchy, but they by no means account for the whole of it. And to be sure the Greeks did invent myths and legends on Roman subjects, but they were very different from the legends of the Roman monarchy, even from the confused and exotic legends of Romulus. If they invented stories for Greek consumption, they usually endeavoured to trace Roman greatness back to some Greek source, telling of Greek exiles like Evander bringing enlightenment to Italy; if they were bent on flattering some Roman patron, they brought some ancestor of the patron's family into connection with the kings, as was done for the Iulii, the Mamerci and other patrician families; if they wrote purely for entertainment, they supplied Roman names for characters in old Greek stories, and left the results to be collected up by Plutarch. The legends of the kings are too full of non-Greek elements, such as Vestals, augurs, and institutions like the *spolia optima*, to have originated with the Greeks. As to the Etruscans, there is no doubt that there were Etruscan kings at Rome, that Roman art, architecture, public entertainments, and styles of dress owed a great deal to Etruria, and that the Romans derived their alphabet from the Etruscans; but there the influence of Etruria seems to have ended. Had it had a more profound effect on Rome, we should assuredly have found the Etruscans easier to understand. But their civilization is so strange and enigmatic to us that we can only conclude that it was quite alien to the Roman way of life; and the Romans tell us so little of their exotic neighbours that it would appear that Etruscan ways were almost as much a closed book to them as they are to us. Nor must we assume that the uncultured state of the Romans before they were Hellenized rendered them incapable of handing down oral traditions and later keeping simple records of events. They must have

been literate enough to record history at least by the time of the Etruscan kings, even if they had to wait for the arrival of the Greeks to learn to do so with elegance. The effects of the Gallic sack, too, have been overemphasized. Some loss of information must undoubtedly have resulted from this break in the normal life of the city, but that does not mean that we must suppose the total destruction of all written records and the affliction of the entire population with amnesia. There is also a tendency nowadays to think that a tradition cannot go back any further than we can trace it and to assume that what is outside our own knowledge cannot have existed. But our knowledge is inevitably scanty, and, since the ancient authorities undoubtedly had access to information which is not available to us and of which we do not know the nature and extent, it seems somewhat presumptuous to reject their version of events without very strong reason for doing so. If we are to discover the truth, we should surely do better to follow Professor Fraccaro's advice and regard the regal period at Rome 'with a certain scepticism, but at the same time with a degree of optimism' <sup>5)</sup> and to consider each part of the story on its own merits.

As to the account given of Numa himself, the information about him is somewhat meagre, but it is reasonably coherent and consistent. Our authorities agree for the most part on the outlines of his reign, and only minor details are in doubt, a state of affairs in refreshing contrast with the confused mass of myth and legend which attaches to the name of Romulus. Apart from a few tattered fragments from Ennius our earliest extant account of the reign of Numa comes in the second book of Cicero's *de Republica*. This is a concise presentation of selected items of information, and, judging from his reference to Polybios' chronology, Cicero was endeavouring to approach his subject in a critical and scholarly manner. Livy, on the other hand, while evidently selecting his material carefully, appears to be content to accept the traditional version of Numa's reign very much as he found it in the works of his predecessors. A longer and more detailed account is given by Dionysios of Halikarnassos in his *Roman Antiquities*. Dionysios aimed at providing a much fuller account of early Roman history than had previously been available in Greek, and to that

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5) P. Fraccaro, *The History of Rome in the Regal Period*, J.R.S. XLVII (1957), p. 64.

end worked with the utmost diligence to collect material from the best-known histories written in Latin and supplemented this with information given to him orally by learned Romans. The result is a conscientious, but rather indiscriminating, collection of traditional material. The book on Numa in Plutarch's *Lives* is even longer and more detailed and seems to draw on Greek writings as well as on the standard Roman histories. The accounts in the *Epitome* of Florus and the *de Viris Illustribus* formerly attributed to Aurelius Victor differ very little from that of Livy and are presumably dependent on Livy for the most part. Various other writers recount particular episodes from the reign of Numa or impart miscellaneous pieces of information about his laws, and, so far as they reveal their sources, they seem to rely on the early Roman historians. These various accounts may be combined and summarized as follows:

Numa Pompilius was a Sabine from Cures, son of Pompon, and he was born on the day that Rome was founded<sup>6</sup>). When Romulus died, Numa was about forty years of age and well thought of by both Sabines and Romans<sup>7</sup>). He had been a prominent citizen and a son-in-law of Titus Tatius, the Sabine who had ruled Rome jointly with Romulus, but he had retired from public life after the early death of his wife, Tatia<sup>8</sup>). Accordingly an embassy came to him from Rome, consisting of the Roman Proculus and the Sabine Valerius, to ask him if he would consent to be nominated as successor to Romulus<sup>9</sup>). After some hesitation he accompanied them to Rome, where he was duly elected king by the *comitia curiata*, and, when his election had been confirmed by the senate and approved by the augurs, he accepted the royal insignia<sup>10</sup>). The people also voted for his admission into the Roman patrician order<sup>11</sup>) and passed a *lex curiata* introduced by Numa himself *de suo imperio*<sup>12</sup>). During his reign the Romans enjoyed peace and good government<sup>13</sup>). He introduced land reforms, distributing part of Romulus' land and the public land among the more needy citizens, marked out boundaries to every holding and divided the whole country into *pagi*, each with officials to inspect farms and encourage good husbandry<sup>14</sup>). In order to unite the Alban and Sabine elements of the population without disturbing the Albans he incorporated the Quirinal, which was settled by Sabines, in the city and

6) Cic. *Rep.* 2.25; Verg. *Aen.* 6.808-12; Liv. 1.18.1; D.H. 2.58; Plu. *Num.* 3.4; Flor. 1.1.2.1; *Vir. Ill.* 3.1; Serv. Verg. *A.* 6.808.

7) Liv. 1.18.5; D.H. 2.58.

8) Plu. *Num.* 3.7-4.1.

9) Liv. 1.18.5; D.H. 2.58; Plu. *Num.* 5.1.

10) Cic. *Rep.* 2.25; Liv. 1.18.6-10; D.H. 2.58; Plu. *Num.* 5.1.

11) D.H. 4.3.4.

12) Cic. *Rep.* 2.25.

13) D.H. 2.60.4.

14) Cic. *Rep.* 2.26; D.H. 2.62.4, 74.2, 76.1; Plu. *Num.* 16.3-4.

himself lived there in the early part of his reign<sup>15</sup>), while the townsfolk he grouped by their trades, without reference to their original nationality<sup>16</sup>). He next reformed the calendar, adding the two months, January and February, to an older calendar of ten months, so as to produce a year divided into twelve lunar months starting with January and adjusted to the solar year by intercalation<sup>17</sup>). This calendar included *dies fasti* and *nefasti*, market-days and festivals<sup>18</sup>).

At first he undertook the performance of the traditional religious rites, but he soon found that they left little time for other royal duties and he proceeded to overhaul the state religion<sup>19</sup>). First he took the precaution of providing himself with divine authority for his reforms. He gave out that he consorted with the goddess Egeria in a sacred grove and that she instructed him<sup>20</sup>); he claimed to have met Jupiter face-to-face and tricked him into forgoing human sacrifice<sup>21</sup>); and he produced a bronze shield of curious design, called an *ancile*, which was supposed to have fallen from heaven and in which the sovereignty was believed to reside<sup>22</sup>). Armed with this supernatural support he instituted a full-time professional priesthood. He himself remained at the head of the state religion, but he was assisted by the *flamen Dialis*, who was a permanent full-time priest. He also appointed *flamines* for Mars and Quirinus and probably minor *flamines* for lesser deities<sup>23</sup>). He turned the service of the Vestals into a salaried profession, imposing virginity and other restrictions on them and entrusting them with the care of the sacred fire, the Palladium and the *ancile*. He chose twelve young patricians to be Palatine Salii for Mars Gradivus. He had replicas of the *ancile* made by a craftsman called Mamurius Veturius, and gave them to the Salii for use in their rites<sup>24</sup>). He instituted the 'greater auspices' and appointed two extra *augures*<sup>25</sup>). He dispensed with the *Celeres* as a bodyguard, but seems not to have abolished them<sup>26</sup>), and he established a college of *fetiales* to deal with the formalities of peace and war<sup>27</sup>). The hearths of the *curiae* he left undisturbed in the care of the *curiones*, but he established a common hearth

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15) D.H. 2.62.4; Solin. 1.21.

16) Plu. *Num.* 17.2-3.

17) Cic. *Leg.* 2.29; Liv. 1.19.6-7; Ov. *Fast.* 3.151; Plu. 2.268c, *Num.* 18.1-3; Flor. 1.2.3; *Vir. Ill.* 3.1.

18) Cic. *Rep.* 2.27; Liv. 1.19.7.

19) Liv. 1.20.1-2.

20) Enn. *Ann.* 124; Cic. *Leg.* 1.4; Liv. 1.21.3; D.H. 2.60; Val. Max. 1.2.1; Ov. *Fast.* 3.261-294; Plu. *Num.* 13.1, 15.2; Flor. 1.1.2.3; *Vir. Ill.* 3.2; Serv. Verg. *A.* 7.763.

21) Ov. *Fast.* 3.295-348; Plu. *Num.* 15.3-6; Arn. 5.1.

22) Enn. *Ann.* 125; Liv. 1.20.4; D.H. 2.71.1; Ov. *Fast.* 3.361-92; Plu. *Num.* 13.1.3; Fest. 117.13; Serv. Verg. *A.* 8.664, 2.166, 7.188.

23) Enn. *Ann.* 126, 127-9; Cic. *Rep.* 2.26; Liv. 1.20.2; Plu. *Num.* 7.4; Flor. 1.1.2.2-3; *Vir. Ill.* 3.1.

24) Cic. *Rep.* 2.26; Liv. 1.20.3-4; D.H. 2.70.1; Plu. *Num.* 9.3-6, 12.3; Flor. 1.1.2.2-3; *Vir. Ill.* 3.1; Serv. Verg. *A.* 8.285.

25) Cic. *Rep.* 2.26; Flor. 1.1.2.2-3.

26) Plu. *Num.* 7.4.

27) *Ib.* 12.3.

and entrusted it to the Vestals<sup>28</sup>). The supervision of this organization he placed in the hands of five *pontifices*, giving them a written copy of his religious laws in eight sections: 1) *curiones*; 2) *flamines*; 3) *celeres*; 4) *augures*; 5) *Vestales*; 6) *Salii*; 7) *fetiales*; and 8) *pontifices*<sup>29</sup>). Of these all were reorganized versions of existing institutions except the last two, which were Numa's own innovations<sup>30</sup>). The centre of religious life he transferred to the area later occupied by the Forum. Here he built a round house for Vesta<sup>31</sup>) and his own official residence close by<sup>32</sup>). At the bottom of the Argiletum, just to the north-east of the Forum, he set up the Ianus, a small shrine with two doors which were to be opened only in time of war<sup>33</sup>). He is also said to have built a small shrine for the Muses<sup>34</sup>).

In addition to reforms of the existing cults, he introduced some new cults. He erected a temple to Fides and instituted regular rites in which the *flamines* drove there in covered chariots with their hands swathed to the fingers<sup>35</sup>). He consecrated his new boundary-stones to Iuppiter Terminalis and established the festival of the Terminalia, at which bloodless offerings of first-fruits were made<sup>36</sup>). He introduced the practice of baking the spelt for sacrifices and hallowed the innovation by the new feast of Fornacalia, the festival of ovens<sup>37</sup>). He was also credited with adding Tacita to the number of the Muses<sup>38</sup>), with dedicating the Argei as places for ritual<sup>39</sup>), with founding an altar of Iuppiter Elicius on the Aventine<sup>40</sup>), and with introducing games in honour of Mars<sup>41</sup>) and the festivals of Robigalia<sup>42</sup>), Agonalia<sup>43</sup>), and Fordicidia<sup>44</sup>). In addition a number of miscellaneous provisions from his laws are quoted by Plutarch and other writers. He banned statues of gods in human or animal form<sup>45</sup>); he forbade work on a festival day<sup>46</sup>); he laid down regulations for the offering of the *spolia opima*<sup>47</sup>);

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28) D.H. 2.66.1.

29) Cic. *Rep.* 2.26; Liv. 1.20.5; Plu. *Num.* 9.3-6; D.H. 2.63.4; Flor. 1.1.2.2-3; *Vir. Ill.* 3.1.

30) D.H. 2.72.

31) Fest. 320.12, 321.4; *Vir. Ill.* 3.1.

32) Ov. *Fast.* 6.263-4, *Trist.* 3.1.27-30; Plu. *Num.* 14.1, *Rom.* 18.7; Solin. 1.21; Serv. Verg. *A.* 8.363.

33) Liv. 1.19.2; Plu. *Num.* 20.1; Flor. 1.1.2.3; *Vir. Ill.* 3.1; Serv. Verg. *A.* 7.607.

34) Serv. Verg. *A.* 1.8.

35) Liv. 1.21.4-5; D.H. 2.75.3; Plu. *Num.* 16.1.

36) D.H. 2.74.2-4; Plu. 2.276c, *Num.* 16.1.

37) Plin. *N.H.* 18.7-8.

38) Plu. *Num.* 8.6.

39) Liv. 1.21.5.

40) Liv. 1.20.7.

41) Tert. *Spect.* 5.

42) Plin. *N.H.* 18.284; Tert. *Spect.* 5.

43) Macr. *Sat.* 1.4.7.

44) Ov. *Fast.* 4.629-70.

45) Plu. *Num.* 8.7.

46) Plu. *Num.* 14.1.2.

47) Fest. 204.1.



he forbade the sprinkling of wine on funeral-pyres<sup>48</sup>), the pouring of libations with wine from unpruned vines<sup>49</sup>), the offering of sacrifices without meal<sup>50</sup>). He prescribed a penalty for concubines who touched the temple of Iuno<sup>51</sup>). He regulated mourning and laid it down that widows who re-married before the completion of ten months' mourning should sacrifice a cow with calf<sup>52</sup>). He forbade fathers to sell married sons<sup>53</sup>).

Numa died of old age, when over eighty, after a reign of forty-three years<sup>54</sup>). He left one daughter, Pompilia, probably by his second wife, Lucretia, and a five-year-old grandson, Ancus Marcius, who was later also to become king of Rome. Some writers also ascribed to him four sons, Pompon, Pinus, Calpus and Mamercus, said to be ancestors of great Roman families<sup>55</sup>). He was, at his own request, not cremated but buried in a stone coffin on the Janiculum near the altar of Fons. His own copies of his *commentarii* were buried near him in a stone box<sup>56</sup>). About five hundred years later, in the consulship of P. Cornelius and M. Baebius, a certain Cn. Terentius brought to the praetor, Q. Petilius, a number of books, which he said had been dug up on his land on the Janiculum and which purported to be the *commentarii* of Numa, miraculously preserved by the box in which they had been buried and by having been steeped in citrus-oil. Half the books dealt with pontifical law and half with Pythagorean philosophy. Petilius immediately referred the disposal of the books to the senate and on their advice then took them to the Comitium and burned them<sup>57</sup>). The copy of the *commentarii* which was entrusted to the *pontifices* later became the basis of Roman religious law. Ancus Marcius, when he was king, asked them to produce it and had another copy made on oak boards, which were displayed in the Forum, until the first republican *pontifex*, C. Papirius, had them copied in more permanent form<sup>58</sup>). After the Gallic sack the *pontifices* restored their records, but refused to put them on public display, hoping to increase their own power and prestige by making the people dependent on them for all information about religious matters<sup>59</sup>). The laws of Numa were still recorded in *monumenta* in the time of Cicero<sup>60</sup>).

That is the account which has come down to us of the reign of Numa, and we must now consider how far we may rely on the traditions about

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48) Plin. *N.H.* 14.88.

49) *Ibid.*; Plu. *Num.* 14.3.

50) Plu. *l.c.*

51) Gell. 4.3.3.

52) Plu. *Num.* 12.2.

53) *Ib.* 17.4.

54) *Liv.* 1.21.6; D.H. 2.76.5-6; Plu. *Num.* 21.4; *Vir. Ill.* 3.2; Solin. 1.21. Cicero differs from other authorities in giving the length of Numa's reign as 39 years (*Rep.* 2.27).

55) Plu. *Num.* 21.1.

56) Plu. *Num.* 22.2.

57) Plin. *N.H.* 13.85-6; Plu. *Num.* 22.2; *Vir. Ill.* 3.2; Aug. *Civ. Dei* 7.34.

58) D.H. 3.36.4.

59) *Liv.* 6.1.9.

60) Cic. *Rep.* 2.26.

his life and achievements, before we can discuss what lies behind the reforms attributed to him.

The unanimity of our authorities on the main outlines of his reign suggests that they all derived their information from the same sources. What these sources were has been revealed to us by Dionysios of Halikarnassos, who states clearly that he based his work on the histories written by Porcius Cato, Fabius Maximus, Valerius Antias, Licinius Macer, the Aelii, Gellii and Calpurnii and other reputable Roman historians<sup>61</sup>). He was acquainted, too, with the writings of Fabius Pictor and Cincius Alimentus, but he found their histories less to his taste, since they treated the early period in summary fashion and he himself was aiming at a fuller treatment. He rejects the works of Greek historians who dealt with early Roman history, accusing them of being slovenly and inaccurate in checking their information. This opinion seems to have been shared by most of our authorities, for only Plutarch shows any signs of having made use of Greek sources. His debt to Greek writers shows itself chiefly in his flirtation with the improbable theory that Numa was a disciple of Pythagoras—a theory which could only have been put forward by the Greeks and which was vigorously opposed by Roman writers. It was probably from Greek writers that Plutarch derived many small details which are peculiar to his account. Plutarch supplies names for persons who are elsewhere anonymous and has more to say than any other writer about Numa's private life. Such minor details are most unlikely to have been recorded at an early period and look suspiciously as if they were invented by Greek writers to satisfy later generations which were curious about such matters. Cicero adopts the chronology of the Greek historian, Polybios, but in other respects he adheres to the traditional account, apart from the statement that Numa had a law passed *de suo imperio*, a detail which does not appear elsewhere. This seems to be a deduction by Cicero, or his informant, based on his general knowledge of early Roman constitutional procedure. With these modifications, then, the account of Numa which we have is a fairly faithful reproduction of the agreed version established by earlier Roman historians. But historical writing at Rome began only at the end of the third century B.C., and we need to consider where the early historians obtained their information and how they handled it.

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61) D.H. 1.7.3.

The Romans may have come late to the writing of history, but they appear to have had a passion for recording and preserving miscellaneous information for its own sake, whether or not it looked like serving any immediate useful purpose. This passion found its chief expression in the *annales* kept by the *pontifex maximus*, which Cicero tells us formed the basis of early historical writing at Rome <sup>62</sup>). According to Cicero's account these *annales* were kept from the beginning of the Roman state until P. Mucius was *pontifex maximus* <sup>63</sup>), the custom being that the *pontifex maximus* each year committed to writing the events of that year and recorded them on a whitened board, which was displayed at his house for the information of the public; and these records were known as the *Annales Maximi*. Servius tells us that the boards were headed with the names of the consuls and other important magistrates and recorded *domi militiaeque terra marique gesta per singulos dies* <sup>64</sup>). He also goes on to say that there was a collected edition of the annual *commentarii*, which filled eighty books; but that was presumably made at some date after 130 B.C. and does not affect the early historians. We are also told that the *annales* were written in an unattractive style <sup>65</sup>) and contained a good deal of material which was duller and more trivial than the *gesta* of Servius' account <sup>66</sup>). Modern scholars have generally assumed, on the strength of these accounts, that the *tabulae dealbatae* constituted the sole record of events and that these boards were stored until they became unmanageable, when they were replaced by a transcript in eighty books, which was called *Annales Maximi* <sup>67</sup>). This meaning could certainly be extracted from the vague remarks of Servius, but it is an excessively grotesque supposition in itself and also disregards the more precise account given by Cicero. Cicero clearly describes two operations: *mandebat litteris . . . , referebatque in album*, which can only mean that he wrote down the events of the year and copied them on to the board. This surely implies—and common-sense endorses the implication—that the *pontifex* recorded the events in a *commentarius*

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62) Cic. *de Oratore* 2.52.

63) I.e. from 130 B.C.

64) Serv. *Aen.* 1.373.

65) Cic. *Leg.* 1.6.

66) Cato ap. Gell. 2.28.6.

67) Professor Fraccaro (*J.R.S.* XLVII, 1957, p. 61) seems to be alone in appreciating the practical problems of storing the *tabulae*.

for his own use and made a copy on a whitened board for the benefit of the public. The *commentarii* would constitute the master-copy of the *annales* and would be preserved along with other pontifical *commentarii*, while the *tabulae* were strictly temporary, as wooden notice-boards generally were. It is quite clear, too, that there is no reason to restrict the name, *Annales Maximi*, to the collected edition. It is clear that Cicero applies the term to the original annual records, since that is what he has been discussing and he nowhere mentions the collected edition at all. It is also frequently alleged, on the basis of Beloch's ingenious arguments<sup>68</sup>), that these *annales* cannot go back earlier than 300 B.C., in spite of Cicero's statement that they dated *ab initio rerum Romanarum* and Livy's tribute to the adequacy of the records after 390 B.C.<sup>69</sup>); although P. G. Walsh expresses misgivings about these theories<sup>70</sup>). The mainstay of Beloch's theory is his interpretation of Cicero's discussion of an eclipse recorded in Ennius and in the *Annales Maximi* from which the dates of previous eclipses had been calculated back to the time of Romulus<sup>71</sup>). Cicero gives the date of the eclipse as *anno trecentesimo quinquagesimo fere post Romam conditam*, but Beloch boldly emends the text to give a date a hundred years later and, stretching *fere* rather far, identified the eclipse with that of 288 B.C. He then argues that this must have been the first recorded eclipse in the *annales* and that therefore the *annales* could not have started before 300 B.C. It seems to me, however, that, apart from the weakness of a theory which has to depend on the arbitrary emendation of a text, these conclusions do not really follow from what Cicero says. If the passage in question is viewed in its context, it becomes apparent that it forms part of a discussion of the value of scientific knowledge in enabling men to recognize an eclipse for what it really is; and the obvious inference is that this was the first eclipse in Roman history to be recognized and recorded as an eclipse. Previously, we may suppose, eclipses were represented by the non-committal term *caligo* with nothing to differentiate them from darkness due to other

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68) K. J. Beloch, *Hermes* LVII, 1922, pp. 119 ff.

69) Liv. 6.1.2-3.

70) P. G. Walsh, *Livy: his Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 111.

71) Cic. *Rep.* 1.25.

causes <sup>72</sup>), and in fact, at the end of his discussion of this topic, Cicero triumphantly identifies as an eclipse the darkness at the death of Romulus, which others are content to attribute to a storm. The other arguments in support of Beloch's theory are even less conclusive. The probability is that the early historians could and did use official records which were reasonably reliable back to 390 B.C. and that they supplemented these by information gleaned from inscriptions, which included laws, treaties, dedicatory inscriptions and epitaphs, and also from private family archives, which were not always completely accurate but were often useful in corroborating or amplifying the official records <sup>73</sup>).

The reliability of the sources, however, can only be upheld for events taking place after 390 B.C., and the evidence for the earlier history of Rome presents more difficult problems. It is certain that a good deal of documentary evidence was lost as a result of the Gallic sack, as Livy laments <sup>74</sup>), but it is also certain that not all was lost and that some lost records were replaced. The difficulty is to gain some idea of what information survived about the earlier period and how accurate it is likely to have been. Livy's remarks imply that a little evidence actually survived, but not enough to give a really clear picture of the period before 390 B.C. He tells us elsewhere that, after the departure of the Gauls, the work of restoring the texts of laws and treaties was immediately put in hand <sup>75</sup>) and this was probably achieved without undue difficulty. Livy says nothing about the restoration of records of events, but this was probably attempted, too, since a certain Clodius, who wrote a book on chronology, alleged that the records were restored inaccurately through the desire of the restorers to show favour to the most important Roman families <sup>76</sup>). This sort of distortion, however, is more likely to have affected the history of the early republic than the regal period, which has very little in it to gratify the great families of later days. The regal period may have

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<sup>72</sup>) This is the word used by Cato (ap. Gell. 2.28.6) in his jibe at the contents of the *tabulae*. Incidentally, we do not know for certain that Ennius' eclipse was identified as such in the *Annales Maximi*. Cicero quotes them only as confirming the date given by Ennius.

<sup>73</sup>) Liv. 8.40.4.

<sup>74</sup>) Liv. 6.1.2.

<sup>75</sup>) Liv. 6.1.10.

<sup>76</sup>) Plu. *Num.* 1.1.

come off better in other respects, too. It is not difficult to remember a fairly short list of kings with a few facts about the more outstanding characteristics and achievements of each one. Details would be lost, though, and dates would be confused. At all events it is reasonable to assume that some kind of outline account of Numa's reign was included in the Roman archives and that this was eventually faithfully reproduced by the earliest Roman historians. Later writers, however, must have expanded the account, for Dionysios makes it clear that later accounts were much fuller than the original histories of Fabius Pictor and Cincius Alimentus, and his own version, based on the work of the later historians, is very full indeed. This expansion was probably achieved in a number of ways. Some additional information may have been gleaned from the private records of the Marcii, who claimed connections with Numa. Details of the religious reforms were supplied from the 'laws of Numa' as preserved by the *pontifices*, probably with some additions deduced from contemporary religious practices and from the official calendar of festivals. The more picturesque anecdotes, particularly the story of Numa's encounter with Iuppiter, probably derive from oral tradition. The supernatural elements in the life of Numa have been an obvious target for criticism, but it should be noted that they are recounted as deliberate fictions on Numa's own part in order to persuade his more superstitious subjects to accept his reforms. We should perhaps hesitate, therefore, before dismissing this part of the tradition completely, particularly as supernatural events in other reigns are not treated in this way, but are taken at their face-value, albeit with some sceptical comments. Numa's relationship with Titus Tatius and Ancus Marcius is very much a part of the tradition and may rest on real authority, but it may equally well have been introduced by historians who found it difficult to envisage kings who were not supported by distinguished family-connections. The difference of family-names would preclude any theory of direct descent from father to son, but female connections could easily be inserted and the ladies' names could be supplied from their fathers' names <sup>77</sup>).

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77) Frazer's theory of matrilineal succession in the early part of the Roman monarchy cannot be maintained without doing considerable violence to the evidence. A better case can be made out for the historical existence of the ladies of the Etruscan period, whose activities form an integral part of the traditions

When we have discarded all the obviously doubtful elements in the story, a good deal that is solid still remains. There is no good reason, for instance, to reject his name <sup>78</sup>), his nationality <sup>79</sup>), and his place in the sequence of kings or to doubt that he was responsible for a code of religious law. The existence of his calendar is not in doubt, since it is preserved for us in the *Fasti* and is distinguished there from later modifications and additions <sup>80</sup>). It has, moreover, been established that the adoption of the twelve-month year and the establishment of a standard calendar of festivals are to be regarded as the work of a single reformer <sup>81</sup>), and that that work was done before the establishment of the cult of Diana on the Aventine and before the introduction of the Capitoline triad of deities <sup>82</sup>). The evidence, in fact, gives strong support to the tradition which ascribed the reform of the calendar to Numa.

As to the religious laws themselves, we know that the laws of Numa appeared in *monumenta* in the time of Cicero, and it is probable that they had been fairly accurately transmitted. We may doubt the existence of written copies in the time of Numa himself, although it cannot be ruled out with certainty. The Latin alphabet is believed to have been invented in the seventh century B.C. <sup>83</sup>) and could have been in use by the end of Numa's reign. In view, however, of the Etruscan origin of the Latin alphabet, it seems more likely that writing came to Rome later in the century, in the reign of Ancus Marcius, when

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of that time, and perhaps also for a system of matrilineal descent among the Etruscans. But there are no good grounds for connecting it with Numa.

78) Pompilius is a well-attested name in the history of the early republic, and is generally regarded as being the Sabine equivalent of the Latin Quintilius. The name Numa appears in an Etruscan inscription (*CIE* 3335), and K. Glaser in Pauly-Wissowa seems to think that this is sufficient reason to classify Numa as an Etruscan king; but, as there were obviously people of more than one stock in Etruria, it is possible that it is a non-Etruscan name.

79) H. Last in *CAH* VII, p. 376, argues convincingly for accepting the story of Sabine origins. He points out that the foundation of the *regia* is 'among the most plausible of the activities ascribed to Numa' and that the site of the *regia* between the Quirinal, with its Sabine associations, and the Roman Palatine supports the tradition of Numa's Sabine origins.

80) W. Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* (London, 1911), p. 95.

81) H. Last, *op. cit.* p. 375.

82) W. Warde Fowler, *op. cit.* pp. 94-5.

83) D. Diringer, *The Alphabet* (London, 1949), pp. 533-5.

there is evidence of Etruscan influence at Rome. If this is so, then the laws must have been recited to the *pontifices*, who were required to memorize them, and it must have been an oral tradition which the *pontifices* were ordered to transfer to oak boards by Ancus Marcius a generation or two later. The story of the oak boards is quite a probable one. We have a few examples of Latin inscriptions on stone and metal from the sixth century B.C. <sup>84</sup>), and writings on more perishable materials are quite likely to go back to the late seventh century. Certainly religious ordinances are likely to have been committed to writing as soon as writing came into use and to have been recopied thereafter as necessary with the utmost care, for the Romans set great store by the correct performance of ritual, and the main task of the *pontifices* was to ensure that this was achieved. It is probable, too, that the laws were copied in more permanent form at the beginning of the republic, as Dionysios said they were. Inscriptions on stone and metal do seem to have been the regular thing for displaying notices of lasting importance from the beginning of the fifth century B.C. The *cippus* from the Forum Romanum, which dates from about 500 B.C. <sup>85</sup>) is inscribed with something which looks like some kind of religious law, although it is too fragmentary to be fully deciphered; and Polybios records the existence of the text of a treaty made between Rome and Carthage in the year following the expulsion of the kings, which was written in Latin so archaic that he could hardly translate parts of it <sup>86</sup>). As we have already seen, the religious laws were restored by the *pontifices* after the Gallic sack, but were kept as confidential documents instead of being displayed publicly as they had formerly been. There is, then, a fair chance that the laws of Numa were handed down in written form for most of their history, but, even if they had never been committed to writing, there is little doubt that they would have been preserved with a considerable degree of accuracy. They would have been confirmed by religious practice, which continued year in year out without variation, and they would have been preserved in the memory of the *pontifices*, whose business it was to remember such

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84) *CIL* 1<sup>2</sup>.3.E1, 2, 3. Dionysios (4.26.5) states that an inscription on bronze from the time of Servius Tullius still existed in the temple of Diana on the Aventine in his time.

85) L. R. Palmer, *The Latin Language* (London, 1954), p. 346.

86) *Ib.* p. 62.



things. The fact that they were kept private after the Gallic sack need not imply that the *pontifices* falsified any part of the records. They could, in any event, hardly have succeeded in distorting the general outline of the religious organization, which is what has come down to us. Only details of ritual could be falsified without arousing suspicion, and of these we know practically nothing anyway.

The religious organization, which was attributed to Numa has been variously interpreted. Preller<sup>87)</sup> believed that it resulted from the union of Romans and Sabines and represented a fusion of the cults of the two peoples, and he regarded it as a supremely important development in the history of Roman religion. J. B. Carter<sup>88)</sup>, on the other hand, dismissed the entire tradition as a 'pleasant fiction', whereby all the oldest elements in Roman cult were referred to Numa; and in this he was followed by Bailey<sup>89)</sup> and by Rose<sup>90)</sup>, who added a theory of his own that most of the tradition had been invented by the Greeks. Warde Fowler<sup>91)</sup>, however, agreed with Preller in accepting the tradition and suggested that Numa's legislation achieved a definite reform and 'placed the religion of the State on a comparatively high level of ritualistic decency', adding to this the tentative conjecture that one of its effects was to put an end to an old magician-kingship, which survived thereafter only in the rituals of the venerable, but ineffective, *flamen Dialis*. These suggestions, however, were largely ignored. Wissowa<sup>92)</sup> sharing Carter's scepticism about the part played by Numa, but realizing that the religious institutions associated with him did not, as Carter thought, represent the earliest phases of Roman religion, adopted the view that the religion of Numa was in fact the Roman state religion, which had developed gradually and had only later been attributed to a single legislator. This theory was endorsed by W. R. Halliday<sup>93)</sup>, who suggested that this religious system represented 'the adaptation of the religion of the farm and

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87) L. Preller, *Les dieux de l'ancienne Rome* (Paris, 1865), pp. 93 ff.

88) J. B. Carter, *The Religion of Numa* (London, 1906), p. 9.

89) C. Bailey, *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 1932), p. 152.

90) H. J. Rose, *Ancient Roman Religion* (London, 1949), p. 16, p. 102.

91) W. Warde Fowler, *The Religious Experience of the Roman People* (London, 1911), pp. 108 f.

92) G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer* (München, 1912), pp. 28 ff.

93) W. R. Halliday, *Lectures on the History of Roman Religion* (Liverpool, 1922), pp. 14 f.

the household to the needs of an organized community', and also by P. Treves <sup>94</sup>). More recently Last <sup>95</sup>) reverted to a belief in the historical importance of Numa, but, while he accepted many elements in the tradition, he rejected the religious organization in favour of Wissowa's theory of a gradual development and dismissed Warde Fowler's conjecture about the *flamen Dialis*, 'unless the history of kingship in Italy is other than we believe'. The main issue to be decided, then, is whether the religion of Numa is the product of a slow process of natural growth or whether it is the result of deliberate legislation. There is also the question to consider of the nature of the religion which it replaced, which might well provide a definite clue to the reason for the change.

When we consider the history of Numa's reign, what strikes us most forcibly is the contrast with that of Romulus. Livy saw the contrast as one between the warrior Romulus and the priestly Numa, because Rome was involved with constant disputes with the Sabines in the time of Romulus, but was peaceful throughout Numa's reign. Numa's peace, however, evidently results from the final solution of the trouble with the Sabines by the election of a Sabine king, and Livy's assessment of the two kings is very far from the truth. Romulus has, in fact, a better claim than Numa to be regarded as a priest-king, while there is at least a suspicion that his military prowess may have been somewhat exaggerated <sup>96</sup>). Romulus, with his divine birth, his exposure and miraculous preservation, his skill at augury, his mysterious death and ultimate deification, has all the marks of a divine king — or perhaps of a dynasty of divine kings — like the divine kings of the early days of Greece and the near East, on whose magical powers the primitive agrarian communities relied to ensure the success of their crops. Nor need we suppose that the story of Romulus was imported from further east, since the divine king is attested for Latium by that famous institution of the *rex nemorensis* from which Frazer began his study of the divine king. His existence is implied, too, in the

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<sup>94</sup>) P. Treves, *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, 1949), s.v. Numa Pompilius.

<sup>95</sup>) In *CAH* VII pp. 374 f.

<sup>96</sup>) In the story of the great battle between the Romans and the Sabines (Livy 1.12.1-10) Hostius Hostilius appears to have been the real Roman leader, and Romulus seems to have been added as an afterthought.

calendar of agrarian festivals which survived into the Classical period, for festivals such as these were elsewhere closely associated with the divine king; and it is implied also in the ritual of a Roman triumph, where the victorious general appeared in the guise of the god, just as divine kings on occasion appeared as gods incarnate <sup>97</sup>).

Numa, on the other hand, shows no signs of being a divine king. His birth and death appear to have been perfectly normal and his family life eminently respectable, his rumoured association with Egeria being generally agreed to have been a deliberate fiction, as we have already seen. So far from making fertility magic the *raison d'être* of his reign, he seems to have been at pains to delegate this part of the king's functions as far as possible to a professional priesthood. He held power, not merely through divine sanction, but by the votes of the people and the approval of the senate; and he was chosen, not for his divine ancestry, for he had none, but for his integrity and his abilities as an administrator. If Romulus typifies the divine king, Numa typifies the constitutional monarch. This becomes clear if we examine the duties retained by the king, which were inherited by the republican official known as the *rex sacrorum*, and those which were delegated to the *flamen Dialis* in Numa's reorganization.

The *rex* remained head of the religious organization <sup>98</sup>). He held office for life <sup>99</sup>) and might not be put to death <sup>100</sup>) — a necessary proviso in a community accustomed to kings who were inevitably killed before their magic powers could wane with the onset of old age. His duties were light. He performed sacrifices on the Kalends of each

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97) Rose vigorously denies the existence of the institution of the divine king at Rome (*Primitive Culture in Italy* (London, 1926), pp. 119-128). He prefers to think that the *rex nemorensis* is an isolated phenomenon in Italy and that all the legends suggestive of divine kingship were either borrowed from Greece or simply invented. The customs of the triumph he ascribes to Etruria and he denies that the general did in fact impersonate the god. It is, however, most unlikely that the *rex nemorensis* could have been a peculiarity of Aricia. There is nothing about Aricia to set it apart from the rest of Latium in this way, and we are more likely to be dealing with an isolated survival than with an isolated phenomenon. The idea of Greek origins will not account for all the legends and certainly not for the institutions of Roman religion; and there is no reason to suppose that the Etruscans supplied more than the superficial trappings of the triumph.

98) Fest. 198.29.

99) D.H. 4.74.4.

100) Serv. Verg. *A.* 8.646.

month <sup>101</sup>), on the Agonal days four times a year <sup>102</sup>) and at the annual festival of the Regifugium <sup>103</sup>); he announced the month's festivals to the people on the Arx on the Nones of every month <sup>104</sup>) and made other announcements on sacrificial procedure in the Comitium on days marked in the calendar Q.R.C.F. <sup>105</sup>); and he provided woollen cloths for the *pontifices* in February <sup>106</sup>). His wife, the *regina*, sacrificed a sow or a ewe lamb to Iuno in the Regia on the Kalends of each month <sup>107</sup>).

The *flamen Dialis*, on the other hand, devoted his whole life to his religious duties. His sacrificial duties, it is true, differed little from those of the *rex*. On the Ides of every month he sacrificed a gelded ram to Iuppiter <sup>108</sup>) and every year he started off the vintage with the sacrifice of a ewe lamb <sup>109</sup>). He also, like the *rex*, provided woollen cloths for the *pontifices* in February <sup>110</sup>) and he performed certain unspecified rites for the Lupercalia <sup>111</sup>). His wife, the *flaminica Dialis* sacrificed a ram to Iuppiter in the Regia every market day <sup>112</sup>), and every time she heard thunder she had to appease the gods <sup>113</sup>). In February she seems to have performed some ritual for which she asked for *februa* and was given a pine-twigg <sup>114</sup>). Unlike the *rex*, however, the *flamen* was constantly on duty. Every day was a festival day for him <sup>115</sup>). Every day, indoors or out, he wore his official costume, *trabea* or *toga praetexta* <sup>116</sup>) and the *albogalerus*, a pointed cap of white

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101) Macr. *Sat.* 1.15.9-11.

102) Varr. *L.L.* 6.12; Ov. *Fast.* 1.333-4; Fest. 9.15.

103) Ov. *Fast.* 2.865-6; Fest. 346.22, 347.10.

104) Varr. *L.L.* 6.13, 28; Serv. Verg. *A.* 8.654; Macr. *Sat.* 1.15.12.

105) Varr. *L.L.* 6.31; Fest. 310.12, 311.1.

106) Ov. *Fast.* 2.18-21.

107) Macr. *Sat.* 1.15.19.

108) Ov. *Fast.* 1.587-8; Fest. 93.3; Macr. *Sat.* 1.15.16.

109) Varr. *L.L.* 6.16.

110) Ov. *Fast.* 2.18-21.

111) *Ib.* 2.281-2.

112) Macr. *Sat.* 1.16.30.

113) *Ib.* 1.16.7.

114) Ov. *Fast.* 2.27-8.

115) Gell. 10.15.16.

116) Originally, it seems, kings and *flamines* wore the purple and white *trabea*, but, after the time of Tullus Hostilius, they adopted the Etruscan fashion of the *toga praetexta*, although the *trabea* was still sometimes worn. Liv. 27.8.4-8; Serv. Verg. *A.* 7.190.

leather, made from the skin of a victim sacrificed to Iuppiter, with an olive twig and a strand of wool attached to the point <sup>117</sup>). So attired he sat in the vestibule of his official residence to be available to suppliants <sup>118</sup>). When he went to sacrifice he put on over his robes a heavy cloak, called a *laena*, woven by his wife, and fastened it with a bronze brooch <sup>119</sup>); and he went his way carrying in his left hand a wand, called a *commoetacula*, for clearing the way <sup>120</sup>), and in his right hand the *secepsita*, a sacrificial knife with an iron blade and an ivory handle bound with gold and silver and fastened with bronze nails <sup>121</sup>). Even by night he might not forget that he was the *flamen*. The feet of his bed had to be coated with a thin layer of clay and he had to keep a box of sacrificial cakes at the end of the bed <sup>122</sup>). The *flaminica*, too, wore ceremonial dress, a dyed cloak fastened with a brooch <sup>123</sup>) and shoes made from the skin of a sacrificial victim <sup>124</sup>). Her hair was dressed in an elaborate coiffure, the *tutulus*, bound high with purple ribbons <sup>125</sup>), on top of which she tied the *rica*, a fringed blue or purple woollen square <sup>126</sup>), with the *arculus*, a pomegranate twig bent into a crown and bound with white wool, set upon it <sup>127</sup>); and over all she wore the *flammea*, the flame-coloured bridal veil <sup>128</sup>).

The duties of the *flamen* and his wife were, however, as nothing compared with the *caerimoniae* which were imposed on them. Their marriage was governed by strict rules. The *flamen* had to be born of a *confarreatio* marriage and to be so married himself <sup>129</sup>) to a wife who had not had a previous husband <sup>130</sup>). Once married, he might not divorce his wife <sup>131</sup>), and, if she died, he resigned the *flamonium* <sup>132</sup>).

117) Fest. 9.27; Gell. 10.15.32; Serv. Verg. *A.* 8.664.

118) Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 290c.

119) Fest. 100.26; Serv. Verg. *A.* 4.262.

120) Fest. 56.29.

121) Serv. Verg. *A.* 4.262.

122) Gell. 10.15.14.

123) Gell. 10.15.27-8; Serv. Verg. *A.* 4.137.

124) At any rate the animal must not have died a natural death. Fest. 152.13; Serv. Verg. *A.* 4.518.

125) Fest. 484.32, 485.12.

126) Fest. 342.27; Gell. 10.15.27-8; Serv. Verg. *A.* 4.137.

127) Gell. *l.c.*; Serv. *l.c.*

129) Gai. *Inst.* 1.112.

128) Fest 79.23, 82.6.

130) Serv. Verg. *A.* 4.29.

131) Ov. *Fast.* 6.223-34; Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 276e; Gell. 10.15.23; Serv. Verg. *A.* 4.29.

132) Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 276d; Gell. 10.14.22.

His sanctity was carefully preserved. He might not remove his cap even indoors, and a *flamen Dialis* whose hat fell off during a sacrifice was obliged to resign <sup>133</sup>). He might not remove his vest except under cover <sup>134</sup>). No man might sleep in his bed <sup>135</sup>) or take his fire except for sacrificial purposes <sup>136</sup>). Newfangled innovations were not for him. He ate no leavened bread <sup>137</sup>); his hair was cut with old-fashioned bronze scissors <sup>138</sup>); he never rode a horse <sup>139</sup>). In order that no restraint might inhibit his magic powers, he wore no knots on his clothes <sup>140</sup>) and no ring except a split-ring <sup>141</sup>). He swore no oaths <sup>142</sup>). He might not even come into contact with men who were under any restraint. His barber must be a free man <sup>143</sup>); any man who knelt at his feet was exempt from punishment for that day <sup>144</sup>); and, if a prisoner in chains came into his house, the chains had to be removed and passed out of the house through the *impluvium* and over the roof. <sup>145</sup>). His safety, too, was guarded by *caerimoniae*. The cuttings of his hair and nails had to be disposed of by burying them under an *arbor felix* <sup>146</sup>), for such cuttings could be used in magic rites to harm him. He might not touch a corpse nor enter a place where there had been a funeral pyre <sup>147</sup>) for fear of the contagion of death. He might not touch or mention beans <sup>148</sup>), since they were the food offered to the spirits of the dead. There was a similar ban on she-goats, dogs, ivy and raw meat <sup>149</sup>); and it looks as if these apparently harmless things may have had associations with the grim rites of *σπαράγμός* and *ὠμοφαγία* as they did in the Greek cult of Dionysos <sup>150</sup>). The ban

133) Plu. *Marc.* 5.3; Val. Max. 1.1.5.

134) Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 274a; Gell. 10.15.20.

135) Gell. 10.15.14.

136) Fest. 94.5; Gell. 10.15.7.

137) Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 289e; Gell. 10.15.19.

138) Serv. Verg. *A.* 1.448.

139) Fest. 71.23; Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 274c; Gell. 10.15.3.

140) Fest. 72.23; Gell. 10.15.9.

141) Fest. *l.c.*; Gell. 10.15.6.

142) Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 275c; Gell. 10.15.5, 31.

143) Gell. 10.15.11.

144) Gell. 10.15.10.

145) Gell. 10.15.8; Serv. Verg. *A.* 2.57.

146) Gell. 10.15.15. 147) Gell. 10.15.24.

148) Plin. *N.H.* 18.118; Fest. 77.24; Gell. 10.15.12.

149) Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 289f. 290a, c; Fest. 72.23; Gell. *l.c.*

150) The existence of the custom of *σπαράγμός* in Greece is indicated by the

on riding a horse may have arisen from the same cause <sup>151</sup>), and perhaps the prohibition on walking under an overhanging vine <sup>152</sup>) may have resulted from similar associations. Another restriction forbade him to look upon an army in battle array <sup>153</sup>), and he might not sleep away from home for more than one night <sup>154</sup>).

Most of these restrictions applied to the *flaminica* also <sup>155</sup>) and she had additional taboos of her own. She was not to wear her skirts above her knee <sup>156</sup>) and she might not mount more than three rungs of a ladder, unless it were a 'Greek' ladder <sup>157</sup>). Apart from these general restrictions there were certain times of the year when she might not touch her husband, smile, wash herself, comb her hair, or adorn her-

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myths of Pentheus (Apollod. 3.36), Orpheus (*Ib.* 1.3.2), Hippasos (Ant. Lib. 10), who were torn apart by women; of Lykourgos (Apollod. 3.5.1), Hippolytos (Id. *Epit.* 1.19) and Pyraichmes (Plu. 2.307c), who were torn apart by horses; of Aktaion (Apollod. 3.30) attacked by his own hounds; and of Stymphalos (Ib. 3.12.6), dismembered by Pelops. Of these heroes the first four are definitely, the rest possibly associated with Dionysos. The custom survived in ritual in the human sacrifice to Dionysos on Lesbos (Clem. Al. *Protr.* p. 36P) and to Dionysos Omadios on Chios and Tenedos (Porph. *Abst.* 2.55); and Plutarch records a similar sacrifice to Dionysos Omestes (Plu. *Them.* 13). These epithets of Dionysos strongly suggest that these sacrifices were connected with ὁμοφαγία At Potniai a goat was said to have been substituted for a human victim (Paus. 9.8.2); and goats were commonly used for Dionysiac ὁμοφαγία (Eur. *Ba.* 138; Arn. 5.19; Placid. ad Stat. *Theb.* 5.159). Goats and ivy were, moreover, closely associated with Dionysiac tragic contests, and, as I have argued elsewhere (*Proc. Class. Assoc.* liv, 1957, pp. 35-6; *Greece & Rome* VII, 1960, pp. 36 ff.) there is reason to suppose that tragedy developed out of a ritual performance commemorating the death of the divine king, and that those who took part in the rending of the king wore goat-skins or other animal skins. Hence the danger of 'she-goats', since the women who killed the king would be in the guise of goats. Dogs find a parallel in the story of Aktaion. The raw meat has an obvious reference to the ensuing cannibal feast of raw flesh. Ivy was one of the plants sacred to Dionysos and was used for the garlands worn by those who took part in these rites.

<sup>151</sup>) The prohibition on horses entering the grove of Diana at Aricia and the identification of Virbius with Hippolytos (Ov. *Fast.* 3.263-6, 6.739-56) strongly suggest some such connection. The fate of Mettius Fufetius (Liv. 1.28.10) may also hark back to an ancient custom of killing the king. This seems not to have been the only method of disposing of the king, but, if we are to judge from the Greek story of Lykourgos, it was resorted to if the crops failed

<sup>152</sup>) Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 290e; Gell. 10.15.13.

<sup>153</sup>) Gell. 10.15.4.

<sup>154</sup>) Liv. 6.41.9. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.71.3-4; Gell. 10.15.14.

<sup>155</sup>) Gell. 10.15.26.

<sup>156</sup>) Serv. Verg. *A.* 4.518.

<sup>157</sup>) Gell. 10.15.29.

self <sup>158</sup>). These were the month of March, when the Salii danced and the *flaminica* went in procession to the Argei <sup>159</sup>); the month of May in which the *sacra Argeorum* took place <sup>160</sup>); and the first half of June until the *aedes Vestae* had been cleaned out <sup>161</sup>).

There were, of course, privileges as well. The *flamen* was entitled to wear the royal robe, in classical times the *praetexta*, but in earlier times the purple and white *trabea* <sup>162</sup>), and to use the curule chair <sup>163</sup>). These honours were associated with the right to a place in the senate <sup>164</sup>). He had a *lictor* to attend him <sup>165</sup>) and a *camillus* to assist him at sacrifices <sup>166</sup>), and his wife was similarly assisted by a *flaminia* <sup>167</sup>). He had an official residence at Rome <sup>168</sup>) and in order of precedence he ranked immediately after the *rex* <sup>169</sup>). This, however, must have done little to outweigh the disadvantages of the *flamonium*; and we are not surprised that the *flamen Dialis* was 'taken' by the *pontifex* on appointment, sometimes much against his will <sup>170</sup>), and that by the end of the republic it was well-nigh impossible to fill the office at all <sup>171</sup>).

It is clear from this that, although the *rex* was nominally at the head of the hierarchy, the part which he played in the state religion was a small one, and indeed the republican *rex sacrorum*, who was left with only the religious functions of the old *rex*, rapidly became quite insignificant as compared with the other priests. The *rex* carried out the more public and less irksome religious duties — those of performing public sacrifices and making announcements about festivals —, but he was able to feel free of religious obligations at other times and so be available for administrative and military duties. The tiresome

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158) Ov. *Fast.* 3.393-8, 6.223-34; Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 285a; Gell. 10.15.30.

159) Gell. *l.c.*; Ov. *Fast.* 3.393-8.

160) Plu. *l.c.*

161) Ov. *Fast.* 6.223-34.

162) Liv. 27.8.4-8; Serv. Verg. *A.* 7.190.

163) Liv. 1.20.2, 27.8.4-8.

164) Liv. 27.8.4-8.

165) Fest. 82.27.

166) Fest. 82.16.

167) Fest. 82.23.

168) Fest. 79.18; Serv. Verg. *A.* 2.57.

169) Fest. 198.29.

170) Liv. 27.8.4; Gell. 1.12.15-17.

171) Tac. *Ann.* 4.16.1-6.



observances behind the scenes were all delegated to the *flamen*. He was dedicated day and night to his religious life and his every action had religious significance. The Romans believed that, until Numa introduced his reforms, the functions of the *flamen* had belonged to the king, and this is confirmed by the royal character of the *flamen*'s regalia and privileges. It also fits well with what we know about the reign of Romulus, who, as we have seen, exhibits many of the characteristics of the typical divine king, for a king who lived this kind of life, devoted to magic and ritual, must surely be classed as a divine king whose sole function was to ensure by his magic the fertility of the land. A king who was intended to concern himself with government could not devote so much time and energy to ritual or submit to so many restrictions. The rules governing the birth and marriage of the *flamen* also suggest that he may have inherited the functions of a divine king. They imply a hereditary kingship in which the blood royal must be protected from contamination because it carries with it something of divinity, which would be diminished by intermarriage with ordinary mortals. The insistence on the requirement that the *flaminica* should have only one husband reminds us of the rule that the wife of the ἄρχων βασιλεύς at Athens should be a virgin on marriage<sup>172</sup>). At Athens the reason was clear, for the βασίλισσα took part in a sacred marriage with the god Dionysos, who must surely have been the βασιλεύς himself regarded for the occasion as the god incarnate, just as the Pharaohs of Egypt were regarded as gods in a similar context<sup>173</sup>). The queen as the bride of the god must be reserved for the god, who of course consorts with her in the person of her husband. A previous marriage to an ordinary human husband might have endangered the divinity of the children of her union with the god, and so her virginity was a ritual necessity. The marriage of the king and queen is thus expected not only to act as sympathetic magic for the crops, but also to produce an heir who partakes of the divine nature and the magic powers that go with it, an heir who will eventually challenge and supersede his father and actually assume his father's personality as king and god reborn.

The sacred marriage does not appear in the Roman calendar as it

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<sup>172</sup>) Dem. 59.75.

<sup>173</sup>) J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1926), vol. 2, pp. 131-2.

has come down to us — unless we may see traces of it in the story of Mars and Anna Perenna <sup>174</sup>), but there is reason to believe that the custom existed before Numa's reforms were adopted. Not only have we a number of legends of kings who were regarded as children of virgin mothers and divine fathers <sup>175</sup>), but there is a story that the lover of Rhea Siluia was not Mars, but King Amulius himself in the guise of Mars, wearing full armour and with his face disguised <sup>176</sup>). Here clearly we have the suggestion that for the purpose of begetting his semi-divine heir Amulius assumed the identity of Mars, for Romulus was always regarded as indeed son of Mars. The hostility of Amulius towards the twins would then arise from the knowledge that they would be destined to supersede him <sup>177</sup>), as in fact they did. That the custom of challenging the king to defend his right to the kingship existed also in the days before Numa appears from the legends about the *spolia opima*. We are told that Romulus dedicated the *spolia opima* for the first time after killing the Sabine king, Acron <sup>178</sup>). He is said to have carved the trunk of an oak tree into a kind of dummy, on which he hung the armour of his conquered adversary. He then put on a purple robe and laurel-wreath, and marched with this trophy to the shrine of Iuppiter Feretrius on the Capitol, where he duly dedicated the spoils. The legend is put in terms of ordinary warfare, but the curious proviso that the spoils must be those of a king killed by a king suggests that originally they were the spoils of no ordinary battle, but of the single combat between the new king and the old. This is supported by the assumption by the victor of a purple robe, for the purple *trabea* was the raiment of the god <sup>179</sup>), and for the king to wear it

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<sup>174</sup>) Ov. *Fast.* 3.675-96.

<sup>175</sup>) Caeculus of Praeneste was called a son of Vulcan because his mother, who was the sister of two gods, conceived him by a spark from the hearth (Verg. *Aen.* 7.678-81 & Serv. ad loc.). Similar stories are told of Romulus (Plu. *Rom.* 2.3-6) and Servius Tullius (D.H. 4.2.1; Plin. *N.H.* 36.70; Plu. 2.323b-d; Arn. 5.18), as well as the more familiar version of the birth of Romulus as the son of Mars and the Vestal.

<sup>176</sup>) D.H. 1.77.1; Plu. *Rom.* 4.2. This is very different from the usual version of the story in which Amulius makes his niece a Vestal in order to prevent her from bearing children.

<sup>177</sup>) This is a common motif in Greek mythology, e.g. in the stories of Kronos and his children and of Zeus and Metis and in legends of heroes like Oidipous and Perseus.

<sup>178</sup>) Liv. 1.10.5-7; D.H. 2.34.2; Plu. *Rom.* 16.5-6.

<sup>179</sup>) Serv. Verg. *A.* 7.612.

was to declare his right to be regarded as the god incarnate. This custom appears to have been abolished by Numa and the *spolia opima* transferred to the sphere of ordinary warfare, elaborate regulations being laid down governing their dedication<sup>180</sup>). The triumphant entry into the city was similarly transferred to the general of a victorious army, but the old pageantry was retained and throughout Roman history a general celebrating his triumph ascended the Capitol dressed in purple and gold and with his face reddened like that of the image of Iuppiter itself<sup>181</sup>). Outside Rome the custom of challenging the king survived in a debased form in the institution of the *rex nemorensis*. Of the elaborate ritual of the divine king nothing remained in the state religion after Numa's reforms except disconnected vestiges, such as the dedication of the *spolia opima*, the regalia used in triumphal processions, the solemn rite of *confarreatio* marriage and the *caerimoniae* of the *flamen Dialis*. At all events Plutarch, who must have known something about divine kingship, saw in the *flamen Dialis* an embodiment of Iuppiter<sup>182</sup>).

The evidence, then, tends to support Warde Fowler's view of Numa's reforms as being intended to put an end to a magician-kingship and of the *flamen Dialis* as a survival of an older religious system. But there is more to ending a magician-kingship than the simple demotion of the magician himself. The divine king did not function in isolation, but was part of an elaborate system in which all the royal family had their parts to play. If the status of the divine king was changed, then the whole system was involved and had to be reorganized. We may assume, then, that some at any rate of Numa's other reforms were aimed at achieving this reorganization, and, if we wish to know how the system originally worked and how it was modified, we are most likely to find the answers to our questions in the study of the other priesthoods which are associated with Numa's reforms.

Our knowledge of the *flamines* of Mars and Quirinus is unfortunately scanty. If we knew more about the relation of Mars and Quirinus to Iuppiter, we might understand better the relation of the

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180) Fest. 204.1.

181) Frazer, *Golden Bough* 2. pp. 174-5. We might perhaps compare the reddened face of the victorious general with the disguised face of Amulius, when he impersonated Mars.

182) Plu. *Quaest. Rom.* 290c.

three greater *flamines* to one another. But the nature and functions of the three gods are to a large extent uncertain. In his more primitive aspect Iuppiter was undoubtedly a fertility god, for he was the god served by the *flamen Dialis* and impersonated by the old divine kings. He was, moreover, particularly concerned with the growth of the vine. The two festivals of the Vinalia on April 23rd and August 19th were sacred to him<sup>183</sup>), and it was the *flamen Dialis* who performed the *auspicatio uindemiae* before the vintage<sup>184</sup>). He also came to be identified with Liber, who was generally regarded as the Italian equivalent of the Greek Dionysos<sup>185</sup>). Mars, although he was later depicted as a war-god, was likewise in origin a fertility god and appears as such in hymns and prayers<sup>186</sup>). Like Iuppiter he was closely connected with the divine kings and was traditionally the father of Romulus and Remus. His close association with Robigus suggests that he was particularly concerned with the corn crop<sup>187</sup>). His warlike aspect may derive from some association with the single combat between the old king and the new, since some of the rituals connected with war can be traced to that origin, but it is difficult to be certain. He is hardly likely to have originated as a war-god, for the early inhabitants of Latium appear from the archaeological record to have been by no means a warlike people and there is no sign that they were troubled by aggression from elsewhere. Quirinus is little spoken of and is a more shadowy figure than either of the other great gods, but he was identified with Romulus, and the generally accepted view that he was similar in function to Mars is probably the right one<sup>188</sup>). Iuppiter was particularly associated with the Capitoline Hill, Mars with the Palatine and Quirinus with the Quirinal, and it may be that they were originally the gods of three separate settlements, or more probably that Mars belonged to the Romans and Quirinus to the Sabines, while Iuppiter was common to both, and that they were formed into a triad when Rome became a single community; but this is no more than conjecture. In order of precedence the *flamines* of Mars

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183) Varr. *L.L.* 6.16; Ovid, *Fast.* 4.899-900; Fest. 265, 374.

184) Varr. *l.c.*

185) *C.I.L.* 1.214.

186) *Hymn of the Arval Brothers*; Cato, *R.R.* 83.

187) Tertullian, *de Spect.* 5.

188) Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, p. 322.

and Quirinus came after the *flamen Dialis* and before the lesser *flamines*, who seem to have been added to the hierarchy at a later date and who might be plebeians<sup>189</sup>), whereas the greater *flamines* had to be patricians born of a *confarreatio* marriage and so married themselves<sup>190</sup>). The *flamines* of Mars and Quirinus were subject to some, but not all, of the *caerimoniae* of the *flamen Dialis*. They did not perform sacrifices every day and they were not obliged to wear the *apex* and the *toga praetexta* except at sacrifices. They were allowed to leave Italy and might go to a province, and they were permitted to ride horses<sup>191</sup>). But it seems that the *pontifex maximus* could prevent a *flamen* from leaving Rome, if he saw fit to do so<sup>192</sup>). So far as we know, all *flamines* wore the same kind of ceremonial dress as the *flamen Dialis*<sup>193</sup>).

We know nothing of the functions of the *flamen Martialis* except that he may have officiated at the ritual of the October horse on October 15th. Dio Cassius has a story that in 46 B.C. Julius Caesar sacrificed two mutinous soldiers in a ceremony in the Campus Martius and that they were offered to Mars by the *flamen Martialis* and their heads were nailed on the Regia<sup>194</sup>). There is no direct reference to the October horse in this account, but the ritual seems similar and, as Caesar was in Rome in October of that year, Marquadt inferred that this was a variant in the ceremony of the October horse and that the *flamen Martialis* was the priest in charge of that ritual. The *flamen Quirinalis*, on the other hand, is known to have taken part in a number of festivals. At the Robigalia on April 25th he took the *exta* of a dog and a sheep from Rome to the grove of Robigus at the fifth milestone on the Via Claudia and there offered them to Robigus in order to avert the danger of red mildew attacking the crops<sup>195</sup>). On August 21st he performed a sacrifice to Consus in the presence of the Vestals<sup>196</sup>). He also took part in the Larentalia on December 23rd, which seems to have included a *parentatio* at the tomb of Acca Larentia in the Vela-

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189) Fest. 144.10, 145.8.

190) Gai. *Inst.* 1.112.

191) Serv. Verg. *A.* 8.552.

192) Val. Max. 1.1.2.

193) Varr. *L.L.* 5.84; Cic. *Brut.* 14.56; Fest. 484.32.

194) D.C. 43.24. See Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, p. 249, n. 2.

195) Ov. *Fast.* 4.905-42.

196) Tert. *Spect.* 5.

brum 197). He evidently carried out his duties in close association with the Vestals and may have been the *sacerdos publicus* who shared with the Vestals the privilege of entering the sanctuary of Ops Consivia in the Regia 198). It was the *flamen Quirinalis*, too, who helped the Vestals to rescue and conceal their *sacra*, when Rome fell to the Gauls 199). The Vestals, as we shall see, were mainly concerned with the corn-crop, and so, it seems, was the *flamen Quirinalis*. If the *flamen Martialis* did in fact perform the sacrifice of the October horse, then he also may have assisted the growth of the corn, since the head of the horse was decked with cakes and the ritual was said to be performed 'ob frugum euentum' 200). The three great *flamines*, then, were mainly concerned with magic for growing corn and vines. The *flamen Dialis* was obviously derived from the divine king of earlier days, and other two *flamines* were probably modelled on the companions and assistants of the king, for it seems to have been customary for each of the leading personages in the cult of the divine king to have two attendants of royal blood permanently attached to him or her, and triads occur as a regular motif in religions of this type. Horai, Charites, Kouretes, Korybantes, Daktyloi and many similar deities appear in Greek cults as groups of three or two according as the leader is counted in or not. In Roman legend the three Horatii and the three Curiatii may owe their numbers to a similar custom, and the same may apply to Horatius and his two companions who kept the bridge. Vestals were also originally two in number and may have been in attendance on the queen.

The functions of the Vestals are easier to determine. They were originally in all probability the sisters, daughters and nieces of the divine king, and also his potential brides, for it seems that, before the time of Numa, they were introduced to their duties between the ages of six and ten and served as handmaidens in the palace for five years, during which time their virginity was carefully preserved 201). It is implied that after five years they married, and there seems no doubt that they married their kinsman, the divine king. The fact that their

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197) Gell. 7.7.7.

198) Varr. *L.L.* 6.21.

199) Liv. 5.40.7-8.

200) Fest. 246.21.

201) D.H. 1.76.3.

virginity was regarded as so important suggests that they were destined to become brides of the god; and, in fact, in most stories about the birth of Latin kings, Vestal virgins, handmaidens and kings' daughters do become the brides of gods and bear semi-divine children <sup>202</sup>). It seems probable that most royal marriages were more or less incestuous because of the importance of keeping the blood royal free from the taint of mortality, and this is the most likely explanation of the innumerable stories of incest in royal circles from Greece, Egypt, and the near East. In this connection it is interesting to note that throughout Roman history the crime of an unchaste Vestal was regarded as incest, which suggests that originally a union contracted by a Vestal was likely to be an incestuous one.

During their five years' service the chief task of the Vestals was to kindle the sacred fire on March 1st each year and keep it burning constantly, for the life of the king was apparently closely bound up with the life of his fire, which probably accounts for the prohibition on taking fire from the hearth of the *flamen Dialis*. The cult of the fire loomed much larger in Latium than it did in Greece, where only faint traces of this kind of fire-cult survived. This is almost certainly because early in Greek history there was introduced the art of storing fire in fennel stalks, so that fire could easily be brought from one or other of the sanctuaries where pure fire was kept <sup>203</sup>). This discovery seems not to have reached Latium and there fire had to be kindled laboriously by friction and carried hastily to the hearth in a bronze sieve <sup>204</sup>). The Vestals also guarded certain sacred objects whose nature was kept secret <sup>205</sup>) and performed various household tasks. They made a kind of salt called *muries* out of common brine, pounding it, baking it in a pot and cutting the resultant hard cake into convenient pieces with an iron saw, and they kept this in store <sup>206</sup>). Early in May they used to place ears of corn in baskets, crush them, grind them in a mill and store the meal so made. Then three times a year, for the Lupercalia, the Vestalia and the Ides of September, they used to make

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202) Verg. *Aen.* 7.678 & Serv. ad loc.; D.H. 1.76, 77, 4.2.1; Plin. *N.H.* 36.70; Plu. 2.323c-d, *Rom.* 2.3-6, 3.2-3, 4.2; Arn. 5.18.

203) E.g. from Delphi or Delos, where fire was kindled from the rays of the sun.

204) Fest. 94.1.

205) D.H. 1.66.2, 5; Plu. *Num.* 9.8, *Cam.* 20.5-6.

206) Fest. 152.5, 153-4.

*mola salsa* by mixing this meal with salt <sup>207</sup>) Salt was also mixed with the water used in the service of Vesta, which the Vestals used to draw from a sacred spring in earthenware vessels which could not be stood down upon the ground <sup>208</sup>). On June 15th they swept out the *aedes Vestae* and the sweepings were taken to a refuse dump on the slope of the Capitol <sup>209</sup>).

The Vestals also took part in a number of festivals. It was they who stored the blood of the October horse and the ashes of the calves from the Fordicidia for use at the Parilia in April <sup>210</sup>). The Parilia seems to have combined two separate festivals <sup>211</sup>). The rustic Parilia was celebrated privately by sheep-farmers on their own estates; but the urban Parilia was a public festival held probably on the Palatine, and at this the Vestals assisted. Bonfires of bean-straw were kindled and the *suffimen* of blood and ashes was burnt on them. The ceremonies of the October horse and the Fordicidia are evidently connected with the corn-crop, since cakes are hung on the head of the October horse and the offerings at the Fordicidia are made to Tellus. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the urban Parilia was likewise intended to assist the crops. Mannhardt <sup>212</sup>) and Frazer <sup>213</sup>) were probably right in seeing in the bonfires some attempt to influence sunshine, and this festival may mark the transition from the season of growing to the season of ripening. From May 7th to May 14th the Vestals were engaged in making the *mola* from the first ears of corn, and then on May 15th they took the leading part in the rites of the *sacra Argeorum*, when they threw the rush puppets known as Argei from the Pons Sublicius into the Tiber <sup>214</sup>). The purpose of this ritual has been much disputed, but since this followed directly on the making of the *mola*, it seems likely that the puppets were made of the straw from the corn which had just been used and not of rushes as is generally stated. Ovid in fact refers to them once as straw puppets (*stra-*

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207) Serv. Verg. *E.* 8.82.

208) Serv. Verg. *A.* 7.150, 11.339.

209) Ov. *Fast.* 6.223-34; Fest. 466.32.

210) Ov. *Fast.* 4.731-3.

211) Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, pp. 79-84.

212) W. Mannhardt, *Der Baumkultus der Germanen und ihrer Nachbarstämme* (Berlin, 1875), pp. 521 ff.

213) Frazer, *Golden Bough*, 10 pp. 329-41.

214) Ov. *Fast.* 5.621-8; Fest. 14.22.



*mineos Quirites*) and twice as rush puppets, and it is just as reasonable to suppose that 'straw' is the exact description and 'rush' the loose one as the other way round. If the puppets were made of straw, the ritual is paralleled by the numerous ceremonies cited by Mannhardt <sup>215</sup>) in which straw puppets were thrown into the water at Whitsuntide or at harvest-time, apparently with the object of disposing of the old corn-spirit once it had done its work. Frazer <sup>216</sup>) raised the objection to Mannhardt's theory that May was the wrong time of the year for harvest ceremonies, but he overlooked the fact that, although the main harvest came later, the Vestals had nevertheless completed theirs by May 14th and were entitled, perhaps obliged, to dispose of their corn-spirit on May 15th. The *mola salsa* was used first for the Vestalia in June. The temple of Vesta was opened on June 7th and the actual festival of the Vestalia fell on June 9th <sup>217</sup>). This was apparently a first-fruits ceremony, when the *mola salsa* was eaten for the first time. The temple was cleaned out and closed again on June 15th. The Vestals were present when the *flamen Quirinalis* made burnt offerings at the underground altar of Consus in the Circus Maximus at the festival of Consualia on August 21st <sup>218</sup>), and they performed the rites of Ops Consua in her tiny shrine in the Regia on August 25th <sup>219</sup>). These festivals are generally assumed to be concerned with the storage of grain, but it seems to be late in the year for this, seeing that the harvest must have been completed some weeks previously and the problems of storage must have arisen then. The August festivals are more likely to be looking forward to the hazards which might beset the ripening grapes <sup>220</sup>). The second date on which the Vestals provided *mola salsa* is said to have been the Ides of September, but there is no obvious occasion for it on that day, and it is tempting to conjecture that 'September' is a mistake for 'October' and that the *mola salsa* was intended for the rites of the October horse on the Ides of October <sup>221</sup>). We know that the Vestals had some connection with the October horse,

<sup>215</sup>) Mannhardt, *Baumkultus*, pp. 411 ff.

<sup>216</sup>) Sir James Frazer, *The Fasti of Ovid* (London, 1929), vol. IV, p. 84.

<sup>217</sup>) Ov. *Fast.* 6.395.

<sup>218</sup>) Tert. *Spect.* 5.

<sup>219</sup>) Varr. *L.L.* 6.21.

<sup>220</sup>) Frazer (*Golden Bough* 1, pp. 14.f.) cites evidence for a festival in mid-August for the purpose of protecting the grapes against hail.

<sup>221</sup>) Fest. 190.11.

since they stored its blood until the Parilia, although we have no information about what they did at the ceremony itself. In December they played an important part in the rites of the Bona Dea <sup>222</sup>) and presumably they concerned in the Consualia on December 15th and the Opalia on December 19th, as they took part in the August festivals of Consus and Ops. They were concerned in the *dies parentales* which began on February 13th and went on to February 21st, and the Vestal performed her *parentatio* on February 13th at the tomb of Tarpeia, who had been a Vestal and in this context seems to have been regarded as the ancestress of all Vestals <sup>223</sup>). Two days later the *mola salsa* was produced for the third and last time for the Lupercalia on February 15th, a festival of which the exact purpose is obscure, but which undoubtedly belongs to the category of fertility rituals <sup>224</sup>). Another obvious fertility rite in which the Vestal were concerned was the Fordicidia on April 15th, when the senior Vestal burned the unborn calves taken from the *fordae* or pregnant cows slaughtered on this day <sup>225</sup>). The ashes were kept by the Vestals to be used with the blood of the October horse at the Parilia. On a certain day the Vestals went to the king and said 'uigilasne, rex? uigila' <sup>226</sup>), but we do not know when or why.

The original functions of the Vestals, then, seem to have been to keep house for the king and in particular to guard his fire and the other sacred things on which his life and power depended, and also to assist him in the performance of the magical rites by which the growth of the crops was promoted. It is not surprising, in view of their connection with this magic, that they too observed various *cacrimoniae*. The badge of their office and the emblem of their virginity was the pair of *uittae*, the white woollen fillets suspended from either side of the *infula*, which was a head-band of red and white wool <sup>227</sup>). When they sacrificed, they covered their heads with a *suffibulum*, a white hood edged with purple and caught at the throat with a brooch <sup>228</sup>). Their sanctity was guarded by forbidding any man to

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222) Plu. *Cic.* 19; D.C. 37.35.

223) Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, p. 306.

224) Ov. *Fast.* 2.267-452.

225) Ov. *Fast.* 4. 629-72.

226) Serv. Verg. *A.* 10.228.

227) Serv. Verg. *A.* 10.538.

228) Fest. 475.4.

be in the *aedes Vestae* at night<sup>229</sup>) or to pass under a Vestal's litter<sup>230</sup>). If a criminal on his way to execution met a Vestal, he was spared, provided that the meeting was accidental<sup>231</sup>). Like the *flamen* they might not swear an oath<sup>232</sup>); and the cuttings of their hair had to be hung on an ancient lotus-tree<sup>233</sup>). As it is unlikely that their hair was ever cut for reasons of fashion, we may presume that the cutting of the hair had a ritual significance and was probably done when they first became Vestals. There may be a parallel for this in the rites of the ἄρκτοι at Brauron in Attica. These girls entered upon a period of service, known as ἄρκτεία in the sanctuary of Artemis when they were between the ages of five and ten, and during their service, which seems to have been an essential preliminary to marriage, they were known as παρθέναι, so that we may see in them a number of similarities to the original Vestals. Several portrait heads and a full-length statue of ἄρκτοι have been found at Brauron and these indicate clearly that their hair was cut off and then allowed to grow again during the period of ἄρκτεία<sup>234</sup>). One has her hair completely shorn and is wearing a close-fitting cap. Two have their hair hanging to just below the ears, and the full-length statue shows hair long enough to be tied back, but still too short to put up. Two girls with more mature-looking features have long hair dressed in adult style.

Numa's reforms left the duties of the Vestals for the most part unchanged, but he radically altered their status. Under his laws their term of service as virgins was lengthened from five to thirty years<sup>235</sup>) and so was made, not a preparation for a royal marriage, but a career lasting best part of a lifetime. They worked under the supervision of the *pontifex maximus*, who scourged them if they neglected their duties<sup>236</sup>). If they failed to preserve their virginity throughout the thirty years, they were walled up in underground cells furnished with a couch and a lamp and containing a small supply of food<sup>237</sup>). The

229) D.H. 2.67.1.

230) Plu. *Num.* 10.3.

231) *Ibid.*

232) Gell. 10.15.31.

233) Plin. *N.H.* 16.235; Fest. 58.12.

234) C. Kerenyi, *The Religion of the Greeks and Romans* (London, 1962), pll. 75, 76.

235) Liv. 1.20.3; D.H. 2.67.2.

236) D.H. 2.67.3; Val. Max. 1.1.6; Plu. *Num.* 10.4; Fest. 94.1.

237) Liv. 8.15.7; D.H. 2.67.3-4, 8.89.4-5; Plu. *Num.* 10.4-5; Plin. *Ep.* 4.11; Fest. 448.31, 449.11

guilty Vestal was brought to the top of the steps leading to the cell in a covered litter. She was then released from the litter and the *pontifex maximus* turned away his face, while she went herself down the steps. When she had gone, the steps were taken up and the entrance filled with earth. Here again there were parallels in Greece. Elektra <sup>238</sup>) and Antigone <sup>239</sup>) were both condemned to be so immured. Their fate is spoken of as imprisonment rather than execution, but it may have been as at Rome a method of execution in which violence was avoided and the semblance of natural death carefully maintained. Vestals were required to live in the *atrium Vestae* and to devote themselves entirely to their duties, but, when seriously ill, they might go to the house of one of the *matronae* to be nursed <sup>240</sup>). In return for their services they received a salary from public funds <sup>241</sup>), were allowed to handle their own financial affairs without trustees <sup>242</sup>), and were honoured with various marks of respect <sup>243</sup>). Like the *flamen* they were 'taken' on appointment by the *pontifex* <sup>244</sup>). A list of twenty suitable candidates was drawn up and one was selected from them by lot, whereupon the *pontifex* took her by the hand and led her away from her father, thus symbolically removing her from the *patria potestas*, with the words, 'sacerdotem Vestalem, quae sacra faciat quae ius siet sacerdotem Vestalem facere pro populo Romano Quiritibus, uti quae optima lege fuit, ita te, Amata, capio.'

The functions of the Salii are more difficult to determine. We know that they carried the sacred shields, the *ancilia*, through the city on certain days in March, dancing and singing hymns and beating on the *ancilia* with their weapons <sup>245</sup>), and they may have taken part also in the Armilustrum in October <sup>246</sup>). They wore a purple *tunica picta* with a bronze breast-plate, a *trabea* striped with scarlet and bordered with purple fastened with a brooch, and the pointed cap called *apex*;

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238) Soph. *El.* 379-82.

239) Soph. *Ant.* 885.

240) Plin. *Ep.* 7.19.

241) Liv. 1.20.3.

242) Plu. *Num.* 10.3.

243) Tac. *Ann.* 4.16.6.

244) Gell. 1.12.1-9.

245) Varr. *L.L.* 5.85; Liv. 1.20.4; D.H. 2.70.2; Ov. *Fast.* 3.259-60; Plu. *Num.* 13.4-5; Serv. Verg. *A.* 8.285, 663.

246) Varr. *L.L.* 6.22.

and for weapons they had a sword hanging from a girdle, a spear or staff in the right hand and the *ancile* on the left arm<sup>247</sup>). The *trabea* and *apex* were originally emblems of royalty, which suggests that the Salii were in early times the kinsmen of the divine king, and it may be that the challenger of the king came from their number. Their warlike equipment indicates their readiness for combat and their dances were not as joyful as they might at first sight appear, since the days when they danced were days of mourning for the *flaminica Dialis*<sup>248</sup>). Their hostility to the king is the more probable since the chief function of the Kouretes of Greece, who resemble them closely in equipment and in ritual, was to protect the divine child from his father and to ensure his survival. In their hymns the Salii sang of Ianus and the other gods, and they sang, too, of Veturius Mamurius, who is said to have made the replicas of the original *ancile*. This explanation of Mamurius and his connection with the Salii, however, seems to have been an aetiological myth, for a story is preserved of a ritual on the Ides of March when a man called Mamurius was wrapped in a goat-skin and beaten with rods<sup>249</sup>) and apparently driven out of the city<sup>250</sup>); and elsewhere we are told that on the day consecrated to Mamurius, which appears in the calendars as the fourteenth of March, men beat a skin with rods *ad artis similitudinem*, which may mean as if fashioning it into a shield. The accounts of these doings are confused in the extreme, but it looks as if the original *ancile* may have been made, not of bronze — for the *ancile* probably had its origin before bronze was in common use —, but of the goat-skin of the mysterious Veturius Mamurius<sup>251</sup>). Sovereignty was said to reside in the *ancile* and possession of the *ancile* would enable the Salii who held it to claim the kingship. This side of their activities, however, seems to have disappeared after Numa's reforms. Twelve identical *ancilia* of bronze were issued to them, they were re-equipped with a more elaborate costume including a bronze breast-plate, and their dances, like the rituals of the triumph and the *spolia opima*, came to be related to ordinary warfare instead of the old single combat of the kings.

247) Liv. 1.20.4; D.H. 2.70.2; Plu. *Num.* 13.4.

248) Ov. *Fast.* 3.393-8.

249) Lyd. *Mens.* 4.49.

250) Propertius, 4.2.61.

251) For a full discussion of Veturius Mamurius see Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, pp. 46-50.

Last, but not least, in the hierarchy came the *pontifices*, who dealt with the practical aspects of religious ritual. Their name appears to mean 'bridge-builders', and Varro tells us that they made the *pons sublicius* and repaired it with due ceremonial<sup>252</sup>). The connection of priests with bridges is at first sight obscure, and many suggestions have been put forward to explain or to eliminate the connection. If, however, we view the *pons sublicius* as an adjunct to religious ritual rather than as an ordinary means of transit, the relationship becomes more reasonable. In fact the *pons sublicius* did play a part in ritual. The Vestals stood upon it to throw the puppets into the river at the Sacra Argeorum, and the story of Horatius keeping the bridge appears to be an aetiological myth for some primitive and perhaps obsolete ritual connected with the *pons sublicius*. If a bridge was required to enable a religious rite to be carried out over water, then it was appropriate for priests to construct and repair the bridge to ensure the proper performance of that rite. Under the laws of Numa the *pontifices* became generally responsible for the administration of the state religion. It was their duty to know all the details of victims, festival-days, temples and financial arrangements for religious rituals<sup>253</sup>). It was the *pontifices* who each month on the Kalends informed the *rex* of the date and then summoned the people to the Curia Calabra and announced the date of the Nones for that month with the words 'die te quinti (or 'septimi') kalo Iuno Covella'<sup>254</sup>). They supervised magistrates and priests in their religious duties and saw that rites were correctly performed. They expounded religious matters to laymen and provided information on all kinds of ritual. They acted as judges in religious cases and made religious laws where necessary. They also co-opted members of their own college and appointed other priests<sup>255</sup>). From being the servants of the priesthood they became its masters, and their importance and influence increased steadily at the expense of the *rex sacrorum* and the *flamines* in the republican period.

It would appear, then, that the effect of Numa's reform of the priesthood was to abolish the institution of divine kingship and to split up the magical functions of the old royal family among a number of

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252) Var. *L.L.* 5.83.

253) Liv. 1.20.5.

254) Varr. *L.L.* 6.27; Macr. *Sat.* 1.15.9-12; Lyd. *Mens.* 3.10.

255) D.H. 2.73.2.

professional priests who were unrelated to one another <sup>256</sup>). The king retained his position as the head of the state religion, but his duties in the sphere of religion were merely nominal. The magical functions of the divine king and his consort went to the *flamen Dialis* and his *flaminica*, who by various *caerimoniae* added to the original taboos of royalty were protected from becoming victims of ritual murder and were also prevented from exercising any secular power. The practice of incestuous marriage was abolished by extending the period of service for the Vestals from five to thirty years and by the adoption of new methods of selecting them. The power of the Salii to challenge the king was removed by the issue of the new and identical *ancilia* in place of the old unique *ancile*, possession of which constituted a claim to the throne. The kingship ceased to be based on divine right and heredity, and became an elective office based on personal qualities.

These changes were complemented by Numa's land reforms, for religion has a strong influence on systems of land-tenure in primitive agrarian communities. In the time of Romulus all land was evidently regarded as the property of the god, as it was in Mesopotamia and elsewhere, and a generous proportion of the best land was set aside to be enjoyed by the god's representative on earth, the divine king, and his entourage. This is implied both by what we know of the privileges of divine kings elsewhere and also by the very nature of the reforms attributed to Numa. Mere mortals might rent small individual holdings, not exceeding two acres <sup>257</sup>), on a temporary basis, and might also receive a dole of corn distributed by the king <sup>258</sup>), probably in return for work on the king's land. There was also some common land for pasturing animals. The aim of Numa's reforms was obviously to replace this 'divine' ownership of land by a new system under which the land was distributed in fairly large freehold parcels of a size to enable a large family to support itself without recourse to state doles <sup>259</sup>). A redistribution of this kind needed to be accompanied by

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<sup>256</sup>) Relatives of priests were exempt from being taken as Vestals or Salii (Gell. 1.12.1-9; Val. Max. 1.1.9), but there seems to have been no absolute prohibition.

<sup>257</sup>) Plin. *N.H.* 18.7.

<sup>258</sup>) Plu. 2.313d.

<sup>259</sup>) The abolition of 'divine' ownership seems to be implied in the law proposed by Cicero: 'ne quis agrum consecrato', in his ideal code of laws, which is admitted to differ very little from the laws of Numa (Cic. *Leg.* 2.22.3).

measures to encourage good husbandry, as recorded in the traditional account of the reforms, because the citizens were now responsible for supporting themselves and their families on their own land by their own efforts, and needed to put their faith, not in the old magic and the king's charity, but in their own skill as farmers.

Now reforms as radical as these can hardly have come about except as a result of the appearance of a new element in the population and the introduction of an entirely new way of life. It so happens that in Latium only three major elements have been traced in the early phases of Roman history, namely neolithic, iron-age and Etruscan <sup>260</sup>). Numa must undoubtedly be associated with the iron age invaders, for we have seen that he had nothing in common with the neolithic way of life, and there is no good reason for connecting him with the Etruscans. Roman tradition has no hint of such a connection, and the religious institutions of Numa differ markedly from what we know of Etruscan religion. The name, Numa, has been cited as appearing in an Etruscan inscription <sup>261</sup>), but this is not sufficient to prove it an Etruscan name; and his family name, Pompilius, has every appearance of being a good old Sabine name, as the Romans thought it was. So Numa was probably a Sabine and a descendant of the iron age invaders of Italy, and we must now consider what manner of men they were and in what circumstances they settled in Latium.

Archaeological evidence suggests that before 1000 B.C. Latium was invaded by the iron age people known as 'southern Villanovans', who are believed to have spoken the Q-dialect of Italic, which was the forerunner of Latin <sup>262</sup>). They lived by breeding sheep, with some cattle and horses, and they were skilled workers in iron and bronze, using bronze brooches and bronze belts to secure their thick woollen garments and owning a good stock of metal tools, utensils and ornaments <sup>263</sup>). Like similar peoples elsewhere they cremated their dead <sup>264</sup>). When they reached Latium, they found it sparsely populated by 'Mediterranean' people, who had scarcely advanced beyond the neolithic way

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260) J. Whatmough, *The Foundations of Roman Italy* (London, 1937), p. 263.

261) *C.I.E.* 3335.

262) D. Randall-MacIver, *Italy before the Romans* (Oxford, 1928), p. 66; also in *O.C.D.* s.v. 'Villanovans'.

263) J. Whatmough, *op. cit.* p. 91; cf. D. Randall-MacIver, *op. cit.* pp. 55-6.

264) D. Randall-MacIver, *op. cit.* p. 68.



of life <sup>265</sup>). These people had come into Latium more than a thousand years previously and settled in the lower valleys of the Anio and the Tiber <sup>266</sup>). Although the rest of Italy had been covered with neolithic villages for many centuries, Latium seems to have been uninhabited at that time, for it was an uninviting region of swamps and wooded hills. These first settlers lived in tiny villages of wattle-and-daub huts and made tools of flint and plain, dark, burnished pottery. They buried their dead in pit-caves and natural grottoes <sup>267</sup>). We know no more about them than this, but probably they lived in much the same way as neolithic villagers elsewhere, growing one or two cereals, keeping a few sheep, goats and pigs, weaving coarse garments <sup>268</sup>). In Latium they not only survived but prospered sufficiently to spread to the Sabine hills, to Tibur and to Monti Lepini <sup>269</sup>). But, in spite of this, Latium had remained a backwater. A few metal objects came into use, new crops were perhaps introduced, such as the vine and the fig, but that was all. The chalcolithic period and the bronze age ran their course in the rest of Italy, but life in Latium went on unchanged. When the Villanovans arrived, the 'Aborigines' were still living in tiny settlements scattered over Latium, and the newcomers were able to find surplus land in the Alban hills and settle among the older inhabitants without resorting to armed conquest <sup>270</sup>). This peaceful arrangement was all the more easily achieved since the newcomers would be pasturing their flocks in the uplands, while the villagers were growing crops in the valleys around rivers and lakes and on the lower slopes of the hills.

This probably was, in fact, the only way in which the two peoples could comfortably share the same territory, for their social and religious customs can hardly have been compatible. As we have seen, the neolithic people lived by mixed farming with the emphasis on the growing of cereals; their social unit was the village; their religion was based on

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<sup>265</sup>) J. Whatmough, *op. cit.* p. 263.

<sup>266</sup>) L. Homo, *Primitive Italy* (London, 1927), p. 68.

<sup>267</sup>) V. G. Childe, *The Dawn of European Civilization* (London, 1957), pp. 241-2.

<sup>268</sup>) MacIver suggests that their grinding-stones were used for acorns and chestnuts rather than for cultivated grains. But permanent villages imply cultivation, since only the growing of crops ties men to one place.

<sup>269</sup>) L. Homo, *op. cit.* p. 68.

<sup>270</sup>) J. Whatmough, *op. cit.* pp. 265, 267.

magic to make the crops grow and ripen; and their view of god was of a life-giving spirit which might be controlled by sympathetic magic. The Villanovans, on the other hand, came into Italy as semi-nomadic sheep-farmers, and to them surely we must attribute the way of life which is generally regarded as typically Roman. The institution of the *familia* must have had its origins in a semi-nomadic life, in which the sheep-farmer, his relatives, his servants and his flocks constituted a self-contained unit bound together originally by necessity, but later by bonds of *pietas*. Such an economy was one in which human skill and good sense could play a more effective part than was possible in arable farming, and it was moreover one in which gains might be carried over from one year to the next and even from one generation to the next. The *familia* must have come to be felt as something constant, like the flocks, unaffected by the coming and going of individual members. All property was owned by the *familia* as a whole and by its posterity, and it was administered by the *paterfamilias* for the benefit of all the members of his *familia*. A competent *paterfamilias* had no need of magic to control the forces of nature, but his responsibilities were heavy and he must have felt the need for moral support in times of crisis. In his early days he could rely on the wisdom and experience of his predecessor. Once he became *pater* himself he carried the entire burden alone, and it is reasonable to suppose that out of his need for some greater wisdom than his own he envisaged a god who was the supreme *pater*, to whom he could turn, just as his dependents turned to him. Hence may have arisen the Roman belief in a *numen*, undefined in shape or name, which had a will of its own and might be approached in a respectful and business-like way with prayers and offerings. Hence, too, the *do ut des* element in Roman religion. This type of religion requires no elaborate cycle of festivals, but simply an occasional *lustratio* in which the property of the *familia* was reviewed and its continued prosperity entreated with prayers and offerings. In times of emergency special *uota* were made and paid later — if the prayer had been granted — with the promised *sacrificium*; and, if any offence had been given to the god, the wrong was righted by the offering of a compensatory *piaculum*. Since negotiations with the *numen* depended on the degree of trust which could be placed in the promises made by the suppliant, the virtue of *fides* was assiduously cultivated as an aid to securing divine support. Other virtues, such as diligence, thrift and

self-discipline, were encouraged by the long-term prosperity which might reward them. The Villanovans must have despised the squalor, fecklessness and superstition of village life; and the family life of the divine king, the very negation of *pietas*, must have filled them with disgust. On the other hand, the villagers no doubt resented the materialism, lack of charity and depressing earnestness of their new neighbours. The peace of iron age Latium was certainly based on an agreement to differ.

As to Rome itself, Villanovan influence showed itself for the first time in the eighth century B.C. There had previously been village settlements on the Aventine, the Palatine and the Capitoline in the chalcolithic period and the bronze age, probably on the slopes of the hills. Now Alban Villanovans arrived in search of new pastures and settled first on the Palatine and then on the Esquiline, and made a cemetery in what was later to be the Forum <sup>271</sup>). Meanwhile a group of iron age invaders seem to have settled in the Sabine hills and absorbed the villagers there. They are thought to have spoken a P-dialect and to have inhumed their dead, but otherwise they bore a strong resemblance to the Villanovans <sup>272</sup>). These people are thought to have colonized the Quirinal and the Viminal and it is to these people that Numa must have belonged <sup>273</sup>). His name, Pompilius, is believed to be a P-dialect name, and he was, like the Sabines, buried and not cremated. The difference in burial-rite, however, does not here seem to denote any very profound racial or cultural difference between the Alban and Sabine elements at Rome. Similar inhumation graves occur in all parts of iron age Rome and in all layers of occupation. Cremations seem to be concentrated in the Forum for the most part. Similar equipment and similar funerary offerings are associated with inhumations and cremations over the whole area <sup>274</sup>). Most probably inhumation is derived from the neolithic peoples, being adopted by the Sabine group of Villanovans and rejected by the Alban group, who preferred their own cremation customs. Other funerary customs seem to have been assimilated and become standardized for all the inhabitants of Rome. It would seem that both Sabines and Albans consisted of a similar

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<sup>271</sup>) L. Homo, *op. cit.* pp. 79-81.

<sup>272</sup>) F. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion* (London, 1938), pp. 96-100.

<sup>273</sup>) Homo, *op. cit.* pp. 81-4.

<sup>274</sup>) E. Gjerstad, *Early Rome II* (Lund, 1956).

admixture of neolithic peoples and Villanovans, so that Numa would not have appeared at Rome as the representative of an entirely alien culture.

Professor Gjerstad<sup>275</sup>) has described three phases in the iron age occupation of Rome. In the eighth century B.C. each hill-settlement had its own style of pottery and was apparently a self-contained community separate from the others; in the seventh century the divisions broke down, a common style of pottery was developed and the valleys between the hills were drained and brought into occupation; and in the sixth century Rome became a fully developed city, probably as the result of Etruscan influence. It is with the second phase that we must associate the work of Numa, for in his time, according to tradition, the Quirinal was linked with the Palatine, and Sabines and Albans were finally welded into a single community.

If Numa's reforms were introduced at this stage of Rome history, the need for them becomes clear. The process of synoecism at Rome seems to have been thorough-going. It must inevitably have involved, not merely an alliance between Sabines and Albans, but the creation of a unified state in which villages and *familiae* needed to co-operate. Now so long as the Villanovans and the villagers could live separately, they could ignore the differences between their ways of life. The *patres* could acknowledge the sovereignty of the divine kings over the villages, while maintaining their own independence, and could to a limited extent do business with them without feeling called upon to take notice of their strange customs. But there came the time when the pressure of growing populations forced the various communities of the seven hills into closer relations with one another and eventually into political and economic unity. Then a compromise was necessary, and such a compromise is to be found in the laws of Numa. Under these laws the outward form of the old village religion was preserved and the old festivals continued to be celebrated. The more objectionable elements, however, were abolished, and this was fairly easily achieved, since they had for the most part been contained in the secret rituals and not in public festivals. Where the changes affected public observances, divine instructions were claimed for the new rites. Presumably each small

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<sup>275</sup>) In a paper read to the Joint Meeting of Greek and Roman Societies at Oxford on the 14th August, 1961.

community had had its own calendar of festivals, and now a new calendar was needed for the new state religion, so that all could work to the same cycle of festivals. These provisions were made for the benefit of the agrarian religion. For the benefit of the Villanovans two cults were added to the state religion. One was the cult of Terminus, in which the new boundary-stones were to be worshipped as gods, and to disturb a boundary-stone was to commit sacrilege <sup>276</sup>). This was obviously intended to safeguard the new system of land-tenure. The other cult was that of Fides, the personification of good faith on which the Villanovan way of life was based <sup>277</sup>). Thus began a new phase in Roman religion, in which abstract virtues came to be worshipped instead of gods, and ethics predominated in religious thought. In the same spirit was the prohibition on statues of gods in human or animal form, for, whereas the old gods were accustomed to appear in the guise of men and beasts, the new gods were purely spiritual qualities and had no concrete form.

In general the aims of the laws of Numa were negative and restrictive, for they were designed less to promote religious observances than to purge them of undesirable elements. They assumed that there would be a constant danger of a revival of the old bad customs, and they provided for strict supervision of all ritual, whether public or private. This attitude towards religion persisted throughout Roman history. The Romans never showed any desire to impose their views and beliefs on other peoples and required only nominal respect to be paid to their religious observances in the provinces, but they resisted strongly the introduction of alien religious practices into Italy. A few Greek cults were admitted by the senate in the early part of the republic, subject to thorough Romanization and strict supervision, and the oriental cult of the Magna Mater was similarly admitted with the additional proviso that Roman citizens might play no active part in the ritual. Unofficial importations were strongly discouraged. The Romans viewed with suspicion and disapproval Pythagoreanism — and hence philosophy generally —, the Bacchanalia, the oriental mystery cults and, later on, Christianity. From time to time philosophers, mathematicians, Jews, astrologers and other alien influences were banished as constituting a

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<sup>276</sup>) D.H. 2.74.2.

<sup>277</sup>) Liv. 1.21.4-5.

threat to the stability of Roman religious laws. In the provinces, however, more latitude was permitted, and in Jerusalem the Jewish religion enjoyed official protection, probably because it was governed by religious laws as strict as those of the Romans.

The laws of Numa inevitably passed through many vicissitudes. During the Etruscan period of the monarchy they were in abeyance. The Tarquins tried to introduce the worship of the Etruscan god Tinia, and Etruscan methods of divination gained a foothold at Rome. Servius Tullius, who claimed to be of the stock of the divine kings, revived the cult of Diana and seems to have been actively opposed to the policies of the *patres*. The setting up of the republic, however, saw a return to the institutions of Numa, except that the king was replaced by annual elective officials in secular matters, while the *rex sacrorum* undertook such religious duties as remained to the king after the reforms of Numa. The temple intended for Tinia was consecrated to Iuppiter, and the laws of Numa were once more set up in the Forum. The Gallic sack brought about the destruction of some religious records, but every effort was made afterwards to salvage and restore them as far as possible, and copies of the laws of Numa were still extant in the time of Cicero. In the late republic, however, religious laws tended to be disregarded along with many other old Roman traditions. Neopythagoreanism flourished, oriental cults were freely introduced and divine honours were paid to Julius Caesar. The religious reforms of Augustus, however, checked these trends and paid due respect to Numa, whose head appears on coins of Augustus. The traditional state religion was reinstated, foreign cults, other than those officially sanctioned by the senate and hallowed by long usage, were discouraged and Caesar-worship was kept within bonds. The Augustan religious revival endured with minor relaxations until the final compromise with Christianity, which, in its acceptance of Christian forms of worship without any sacrifice of Roman ethical values or of the traditional Roman conception of divinity as an abstract power without name or shape or of the Roman emphasis on duty to family and to state, was itself very much in the spirit of Numa.

It would seem, then, that, although the religion of Numa may have had some connection with Preller's union of Albans and Sabines and with Halliday's development of urban life, the real clue to the motives behind the reforms is to be found in Warde Fowler's theory of

replacing barbarism and magic with a religious system which was 'decent and stately, if soulless' <sup>278</sup>). As to the opinion of Wissowa and others that this system was not the work of one man, but was the result of a prolonged process of natural change, I would say that, if the nature and purpose of the reforms were such as I have tried to demonstrate, they could not have been put into force piecemeal but must have formed part of a single plan, since each reform is closely inter-linked with the others. In any event, once the functions of a divine king are abolished or even diminished, the whole religious organization inevitably disintegrates, so that there is a plain choice between the destruction of the cult, apart from survivals of private superstitious practices, and the imposition of an entirely artificial system, as we find at Rome. It is difficult to see how this system could be brought into existence except by deliberate planning and legislation, and it is noticeable that no one who subscribes to the theory of natural growth has ventured to give a detailed description of the process of this growth. If the reforms were carried out at one time, that time must be dated to the regal period. As we have seen, the calendar of festivals must date from the regal period, and the meagre duties of the republican *rex sacrorum* make it certain that the delegation of the royal religious functions took place during the regal period. Reforms introduced in the time of the monarchy are most likely to have been sponsored by one of the kings; and the king who has the best claim to be credited with these reforms is obviously Numa. So then we may regard Numa Pompilius as the man who, by his great compromise, united Rome and established the Roman way of life which was to survive with only minor modifications throughout the history of Rome, and to exercise a powerful influence on the life of western Europe thereafter, providing a basis for those ideals of justice and humanity which, as the late Hugh Last once pointed out in a memorable lecture <sup>279</sup>), are especially cherished in those parts of Europe which were once under Roman sway. Roman history indeed begins with Numa, as Livy evidently thought that it did, and we may give our assent when Anchises answers his own question:

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<sup>278</sup>) Warde Fowler, *Religious Experience of the Roman People*, p. 108.

<sup>279</sup>) On 'Romanization', given at the Joint Meeting of the Greek and Roman Societies at Oxford in 1948.

‘nosco crinis incanaque menta  
regis Romani primanm qui legibus urbem  
fundabit Curibus paruis et paupere terra  
missus in imperium magnum’ 280).

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I should like to express my gratitude to Miss M. V. Taylor and Dr. S. Weinstock for their helpful and constructive criticisms, though without implying that they are in any way responsible for the theories contained in this article.

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280) Verg. *Aen.* 6.809-12.



# DIE ZEN-ERLEUCHTUNG IN NEUEREN ERLEBNISBERICHTEN

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## *Einführendes*

Während der Zen-Buddhismus heute von begeisterten Anhängern für den Westen popularisiert wird, ist der wissenschaftlichen Forschung vordringlich die Erforschung weiteren Quellenmaterials aufgegeben. Die gelehrte Arbeit wendet sich naturgemäss mit Vorliebe den frühen Geschichtsquellen zu, aber im Falle des Zen befinden wir uns in der selten glücklichen Lage, die Vergangenheit an der Gegenwart überprüfen zu können. Trotz des sich täglich ausdehnenden Einbruchs der technischen westlichen Zivilisation gibt es in Japan noch ursprüngliches Zen-Leben, das sich uns in leicht zugänglichen Selbstzeugnissen darbietet. Wir untersuchen im folgenden eine Anzahl von Erlebnisberichten zeitgenössischer japanischer Buddhisten, die unter der Führung angesehenen Zen-Meister die Erleuchtung erlangten. Alle Berichte entstammen der gleichen Schule, die sich am besten in ihrem Verhältnis zu anderen Richtungen kennzeichnen lässt.

Die zahlreichen Schulen und Richtungen, die innerhalb des Zen-Buddhismus entstanden, unterscheiden sich bei Wahrung der gleichen Grundhaltung in ihrer Auffassung vom Erleuchtungserlebnis, in ihrer Art der Übung und in der Beurteilung der Beziehung beider zueinander. Durch D. T. Suzuki wurde im Westen zuerst das Rinzai-Zen bekannt. Im heutigen Japan ist die Sôtô-Schule mindestens ebenso bedeutend. Ausser diesen beiden Hauptrichtungen gibt es Zwischenformen, und oft haben sich durch die Originalität einzelner Zen-Meister bedeutsame Eigenarten herausentwickelt.

Wenn man die Zen-Praxis in den japanischen Zen-Klöstern anschaut, so heben sich drei typische Formen deutlich ab. Dem klassischen chinesischen Zen der T'ang- und Sungzeit kommt am nächsten die systema-

tische Kôan-Übung, der man sich in der Klöstern der Rinzai-Sekte, vorab in Kyoto und Kamakura, widmet. Die Kôan werden in jahrelangem Bemühen durch konzentriertes Hinschauen geistig durchdrungen und in ihrer Gesamtheit zum Erlebnis gebracht. Allerdings kann man in einem Menschenalter unmöglich alle 1700 existierenden Kôan-Aufgaben bewältigen. Aber es gelingt die innere Verarbeitung und geistige Aneignung einer grossen Anzahl der in den paradoxen Taten und Sprüchen der Meister und ihren Wechselgesprächen (*mondô*) mit den Jüngern enthaltenen „Muster der Alten“. Zu dieser Art von Kôan-Übung gehört wesentlich die im „Alleingehen“ (*dokusan*) betätigte Führung durch den Meister. Denn nur der Meister kann autoritativ die Aufgabe stellen, den Fortschritt der Übung überwachen und den Erfolg mit Sicherheit feststellen. Man beobachtet bei den Rinzai-Meistern, je nach ihrer persönlichen Geisteshaltung und psychologischen Eigenart, eine mehr spekulative oder mehr praktische Ausrichtung. Übrigens bedingen auch die geistigen und charakterlichen Eigenschaften der Übenden mannigfache Unterschiede im Fortschreiten auf dem Erleuchtungsweg.

Das Grunddogma des Sôtô-Zen ist die Gleichheit von Übung und Erleuchtung, von Dôgen so formuliert: „Im Buddha-Gesetz sind Übung und Erleuchtung eines und gleich. Weil schon die Übung aufgrund der Erleuchtung geschieht, ist im Üben des Anfangenden bereits das Ganze der ursprünglichen Erleuchtung“<sup>1)</sup>. Der Übende besitzt alles schon in der Übung und darf keine Erleuchtung ausserhalb der Übung suchen. Doch ist damit nicht das Erleuchtungserlebnis ausgeschlossen. Dôgen erfuhr es in einer gewaltigen psychischen Erschütterung, als er spontan ausrief: „Geist und Leib sind ausgefallen, ausgefallen sind Geist und Leib“ (*shinjin datsuraku, datsuraku shinjin*). Seine Erfahrung gilt bis heute im Sôtô-Zen als höchster Ausdruck erleuchteten Buddhatums. Aber in den grossen Haupttempeln der Sôtô-Sekte wird das Erleuchtungserlebnis nicht methodisch angestrebt. Auch während der besonderen Übungsperioden (*sesshin*) ist die Anzielung eines plötzlichen Erlebnisses nicht erwünscht. Ob sich Erlebnisse einstellen oder nicht, im Rund der Übung ist von Augenblick zu Augenblick jedes Moment in gleicher Weise auf die absolute Mitte bezogen. Ein Sôtô-

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1) Shôbôgenzô, Abschnitt Bendôwa, zitiert bei H. Dumoulin, Zen Geschichte und Gestalt, Bern 1959, S. 169.

Mönch mag sich seiner besonderen Charakteranlage folgend auch dem Kôan widmen, notwendig ist dieses nicht. Die schlichte Meditation im Hocksitz genügt. In dieser einen Übung des Sitzens in Meditation (*zazen*) ist alles enthalten, und es bedarf weder des Kôan noch der Führung durch den Meister im Alleingehen. Diese Form der Zen-Übung wird nach ihrem Urheber und idealem Meister auch Dôgen-Zen genannt.

In neuerer Zeit entstand durch die originale Leistung des Zen-Meisters Harada Sogaku (1871-1961) eine dritte Form der Zen-Übung, die Elemente aus den beiden Hauptformen des Rinzai und Sôtô in eine neue Einheit verbindet<sup>2)</sup>. Harada Sogaku entstammt selbst der Sôtô-Sekte und überkam in jungen Jahren von Meister Harada Sodô die Dharma-Überlieferung dieser Sekte. Nach Beendigung seiner Studien an der buddhistischen Komazawa-Universität in Tokyo begab er sich auf Wanderschaft, übte unter berühmten Meistern und erlangte unter der Leitung des Abtes des Nanzenji-Klosters in Kyoto, Dokutan Sôsan, das Siegel der Erleuchtung in der Rinzai-Sekte. Später übernahm er die Leitung des Tempelklosters Hosshinji im Bezirk Fukui, wo er eine Zen-Halle einrichtete und zahlreiche Jünger nach eigenen in der Erfahrung erprobten Grundsätzen schulte. Seine Methode ist zielsicher auf das Erleuchtungserlebnis ausgerichtet. Aus dem Rinzai übernimmt sie die Übung von Kôan und Alleingehen, aber die Kôan werden nicht in der ganzen Breite geübt, sondern unter Ausschaltung oder starkem Zurücktreten des intellektuellen Moments mit einer gewissen Schematisierung der praktischen Realisierung nutzbar gemacht. Eine unverkennbare Neigung zu gefühlsbetonter Askese dürfte aus dem Sôtô-Zen oder genauer von Dôgen herrühren. Meister Harada Sogaku war äusserst zurückhaltend im Anerkennen der Echtheit der Erleuchtungserlebnisse seiner Jünger. Dennoch konnten unter seiner Führung viele hundert Buddha-Mönche und zahlreiche buddhistische Laien die volle Erfahrung erreichen<sup>3)</sup>. Seine Schule wird heute von seinen Jüngern fortgesetzt, die eine starke Wirksamkeit im Lande

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2) Vgl. zum folgenden Meister Haradas Selbstbiographie Daiun Sogaku Jiden, Kobama 1960.

3) Auf den ausserordentlichen Einfluss des Meisters Harada kann man auch aus der Tatsache schliessen, dass während der langen Zeitspanne seiner Wirksamkeit, wie bei den Begräbnisfeierlichkeiten im Zen-Kloster Hosshinji gerühmt wurde, ungefähr 3000 Buddha-Mönche durch seine Schule gingen.

entfalten und denen wir wertvolle Nachrichten über den Erleuchtungsweg ihres Meisters verdanken. Während Meister Harada seinen Jüngern diskretes Schweigen bezüglich ihrer Erlebnisse anempfahl, sind aus der Feder erleuchteter Männer und Frauen der dritten Generation in jüngster Zeit mehrere Sammlungen von Erlebnisberichten hervorgegangen, die unsere Kenntnisse über die Psychologie der Zen-Übung und der Erleuchtungserfahrung nicht wenig bereichern. Für die Zuverlässigkeit dieser Berichte spricht unter anderem die Tatsache, dass sie in vielen wichtigen Punkten mit den bekannten Zeugnissen aus der Vergangenheit übereinstimmen.

Die unserer Untersuchung zugrunde liegenden Quellsammlungen werden uns im Laufe dieser Studie ihre Eigenart offenbaren. Hier genügen wenige einführende Bemerkungen. Da sind zunächst zwei Bände mit Erlebnisberichten von Jüngern aus der Schule des Zen-Meisters Yasutani Ryôkô. Der greise Meister lebt in einem kleinen Tempel in einem Vorort Tokyos. Im reifen Mannesalter erlangte er die Erleuchtung unter Harada Sogaku, den er als „als grossen und wahren Meister der Zen-Übung und des Erleuchtungssiegels“ verehrt. Die beiden Bände enthalten 30 zum Teil recht umfangreiche Berichte, meistens von buddhistischen Laien, Männern und Frauen, die unter der starken und milden Führung Meister Yasutanis das Ziel der Erleuchtung erreichten <sup>4)</sup>.

Eine äusserst reizvolle Lektüre gewähren trotz einer gewissen Eintönigkeit die 60 Erlebnisberichte aus der Schule der Äbtissin Nagasawa Sozen, der hervorragendsten Jüngerin des Meisters Harada. Unter den Jüngern dieser bedeutenden Frau befinden sich Männer und Frauen, der grössere Teil der Berichte stammt jedoch aus der Feder buddhistischer Nonnen, die ihrer Meisterin restlos ergeben unter ihrer Leitung die Erleuchtung erlangten. Die Berichte schildern sehr anschaulich sowohl das Leben in der Zen-Halle als auch die vorantreibende Führung der Äbtissin, deren Charakterreife und Geistesstärke sich überzeugend kundtun <sup>5)</sup>.

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4) Kyûdô no tabi. Gendaijin ga kataru Zen no satori no taikendan (Reise des Suchens nach dem Weg. Moderne Menschen erzählen ihr Erleuchtungserlebnis im Zen), herausgeg. von Yasutani Ryôkô, Erste Sammlung, Tokyo 1959 (fortan zitiert: Q. 1), Zweite Sammlung, Tokyo 1962 (fortan zitiert: Q. 2).

5) Sanzen Taikenshû (Erlebnisberichte von der Zen-Übung), herausgeg. von T. Iizuka, Tokyo 1956 (fortan zitiert: Q. 3).

Der Zen-Meister Ishiguro Hôryû hat der Erklärung seiner besonderen Methode in seinem japanischen Buch „Abriss der Physik des Zen“ einen Anhang mit 22 kurzen Erlebnisberichten seiner Jünger beigefügt <sup>6)</sup>. Ishiguro, ebenfalls aus der Schule Haradas, hat den Erleuchtungsweg seines Meisters ins Technische gewandt und zu einer neuen Schnellmethode der Zen-Übung abgeändert. Er erzielt mit seinen Schülern in einem Kursus von 5 Tagen eine psychologische Erfahrung, deren Wert verschieden beurteilt wird <sup>7)</sup>. Das religiöse Moment tritt in seiner Methode völlig zurück, dafür wird durch technische Mittel ein Höchstmass von psychischer Wirksamkeit erzielt. In den Berichten über den Schnellkursus überwiegt das Psychologische. Mehrere Jünger betonen die Rationalität der Methode und rühmen das Sicherheitsgefühl, das ihnen die Vernünftigkeit des Meisters einflösste.

### *Die Erleuchtung in der Harada-Schule*

In der Harada-Schule wird die Erleuchtung im Sinne des Bodhidharma in den Mund gelegten Wortes verstanden, mit dem die Südschule des chinesischen Zen den plötzlichen Erleuchtungsweg Hui-nengs legitimierte: „Die eigene Natur schauen und Buddha werden“ <sup>8)</sup>. Zen-Meister Yasutani erklärt mit Rückgriff auf dieses Wort das Wesen der Erleuchtung folgendermassen: „Die Erleuchtung bedeutet das Durchschauen der eigenen Wesensnatur, zugleich bedeutet dieses das Durchschauen der Wesensnatur des Kosmos und aller Dinge. Denn das Durchschauen der Wesensnatur ist die Weisheit der Erleuchtung. Man mag die Wesensnatur Wahrheit nennen, wenn man so will. Im

6) Zen rigaku Yôkô (Abriss der Physik des Zen) von Ishiguro Hôryû, Tokyo 1960.

7) Meister Harada Sogaku hat nach einer zuverlässigen Mitteilung noch kurz vor seinem Tode die Methode Ishiguros abgelehnt und seinem Jünger sein Misfallen ausgedrückt. Bei japanischen Zen-Meistern stösst die Ishiguro-Methode auf starken Widerspruch. Vgl. die kritische Beurteilung durch Shibayama Zenkei, den Abt des berühmten Zen-Klosters Nanzenji (Kyoto) in der buddhistischen Monatszeitschrift Daihōrin, Bd. 29, Nr. 3 (März 1962), S. 56-62. Über die Methode Ishiguros berichtet in englischer Sprache K. Satō, Professor der Psychologie an der Universität Kyoto, in der Zeitschrift Psychologia, Bd. 2, Nr. 2 (Juni 1959), S. 107-113. Im Theravāda-Buddhismus stellt die neue burmesische Meditationsmethode den Versuch eines Schnellweges zum Nirvāna dar. Vgl. H. Dumoulin, Methoden und Ziele buddhistischer Meditation. Satipatthāna und Zen, in Archiv für Religionspsychologie, Bd. 7 (1962), S. 78-85.

8) Im Liu-tsu ta-shih fa-pao-t'an ching (Taishō Daizōkyō No. 2008), vgl. H. Dumoulin, Zen Geschichte und Gestalt, S. 96 ff.

Buddhismus nennt man sie von früh her das Absolute (*bhûtatathatâ*) oder die Buddha-Natur (*buddhatâ*) oder den Einen Geist (*eka citta*). Im Zen nennt man sie auch das Nichts, die eine Hand oder das ursprüngliche Antlitz. Mag die Aufschrift verschieden sein, der Inhalt ist völlig gleich" 9). Die im wesentlichen gleiche Erleuchtung, so führt Yasutani in seiner Nachschrift zum ersten Band der Erlebnisberichte weiter aus, weist nach Tiefe, Heiligkeit und Ganzheit, verschiedene Grade auf. Ihr Inhalt erschöpft sich in dem einen Wort „Leere“ (*śûnya*), das im Sinne der Philosophie Nâgârjunas die Soheit der Dinge unter Negierung aller Substantialität und begrifflicher Fixierung ausdrückt.

Durch das Erleuchtungserlebnis wird dem Zen-Jünger die Leere zur lebensvollen Überzeugung. Solange das Wissen um die Leere nur Begriff und Gedanke ist, kann die Überzeugung nicht Fleisch und Blut annehmen. Deshalb vermag nur, wer die Erfahrung besitzt, befriedigend Antwort zu stehen, wenn er von allen Ecken aus befragt über die Wirklichkeit der Leere Auskunft geben soll. Die Erlebnisberichte verraten nicht, wie die Zen-Meister beim Alleingehen Echtheit und Grad der jeweiligen Erleuchtung feststellen. Yasutani rechtfertigt die Geheimhaltung der Untersuchungsmethode durch den Hinweis auf nachfolgende Geschlechter, die durch Angaben über das Ermittlungsverfahren zu unechten Antworten verleitet werden könnten. Überdies gibt es, wie es scheint, keine objektiv sicheren Kriterien für das Erlebnis, dieses kann vielmehr nur jeweils im unmittelbaren Kontakt von Geist zu Geist erkannt werden. Doch muss beachtet werden, dass die Zen-Erleuchtung von den zünftigen Meistern vom Leitbild der monistischen Mahâyâna-Philosophie her nach Echtheit und Wert beurteilt wird. Es ist zweifelhaft, ob eine weltanschaulich anders strukturierte Erfahrung vor den authentischen Zen-Maßstäben bestehen kann.

Die Erlebnisbeschreibungen zeigen trotz durchgängiger Wortkargheit und einer Neigung zu stereotypem Ausdruck ausser den allgemeinen Merkmalen auch charakteristische Besonderheiten an, die das Erlebnis selbst beleuchten. Selbstverständlich betonen alle die Unzulänglichkeit aller Worte und Begriffe zum Ausdruck des Erlebten. Das Erlebnis ist unaussprechlich, es eröffnet eine neue Dimension nach zwei Richtungen hin, nämlich in die unbegrenzte Weite des Kosmos

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9) Q. 1, S. 288 f.

und die unendliche Tiefe des Selbst hinein. Das Unaussprechliche wird im oben beschriebenen Sinne der monistischen Mahâyâna-Philosophie verstanden. Die devotionalen Haltungen, die die Übung bis in ihre letzten Phasen hinein begleiten, werden abgestreift. Das unsagbare Erlebnis wird mahayanistisch gedeutet.

### *Anzeichen und Vorstufen*

Wenn wir uns den Berichten selbst zuwenden, so kündigt sich das Erlebnis in vielen Fällen durch Vorzeichen an, die der erfahrene Meister erkennt, aber nicht mit dem Erlebnis verwechselt. Der Übende selbst mag wohl höchste Konzentrationsstufen, die mit einer Bewusstseinsveränderung verbunden sind, für die Erleuchtung halten. So mühte sich ein Übender mit Aufgebot seiner letzten Kräfte und erfuhr plötzlich einen Durchbruch. „Ich vergass meiner selbst und schrie einige Sekunden lang laut auf. Ah! Die Eisenwand zerbrach“. Doch war die starke Gefühlserregung, die ihn ergriffen hatte, noch nicht die Erleuchtungserfahrung. Vom Meister darüber belehrt, übte er weiter und erreichte nun bald das Ziel <sup>10)</sup>. Ähnlich erging es einer Übenden, der alle Töne in ein einziges „mu“ (Nichts) zusammenzufließen schienen. Auch sie musste noch eine letzte Anstrengung machen <sup>11)</sup>. In solchen Fällen ermutigt die Äbtissin die Übenden durch die Versicherung, nur mehr ein papierdünnes Häutchen trenne von der Einheit, es bedürfe noch eines geringen Stosses, damit die Schale aufbreche <sup>12)</sup>.

Das Erlebnis ist verschieden von den Gefühlswallungen und plötzlichen luminösen Erkenntnissen, die sich auf dem Übungsweg besonders in der letzten Phase einstellen. Im Bericht eines buddhistisch frommen Studenten lesen wir von mancherlei psychischen und physischen Reaktionen. Ihn erschüttern unaufhörlich heftige Gefühlsbewegungen. Bei der gemeinsamen Sutrenrezitation entlockt ihm der Anblick der andächtigen Beter reichliche Tränen. Gleich am ersten Tag der Übungsperiode hat er ein „erleuchtungsartiges Erlebnis“, das freilich vom Meister nicht anerkannt wird. Aber schon vor der Übungsperiode hatte er eine andere, wie er meint, „erleuchtungsartige Erfahrung“, die für die psychische Haltung des Übenden auf dem Erleuchtungsweg als typisch angesehen werden kann. „Während ich an einem späten

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10) Q. 2, S. 6 f.

11) Q. 3, S. 14 f.

12) z.B. Q. 3, S. 151; 3, S. 206; 3, S. 293.

Märztag den Garten kehrte“, so erzählt er, „kam mir auf einmal das Gefühl: Bin ich selbst und die Welt nicht zusammen und eins? Kann es so etwas wie ein einsames Ich überhaupt geben?“ Er lässt sich von diesem Gefühl ergreifen und reflektiert: „Ich kehre jetzt so mit dem Besen den Garten. Der Besen fährt daher, während er einen Laut gibt und gleichsam die Augen dem Erdboden zuwendet. Dieser Erdboden hier ist nichts anderes als ein Teil des Erdballs. Dann bin ich selbst mit dem Erdball in eins verknüpft. Der Laut des Besens könnte nicht auftönen, wenn nicht ich selbst und der Besen und der Erdboden hier existierten. Mann kann keines vom anderen trennen“. Aber die Freude, die diese Gedanken zuerst in ihm wecken, klingt rasch ab, und er begreift, dass gedankliche Reflexionen nicht die Erleuchtung sind <sup>13)</sup>.

In manchen Fällen lässt sich ein deutlicher Zusammenhang zwischen luminösen Erkenntnissen und dem Erleuchtungserlebnis klar erkennen. Ein Student erfasste zuerst in intellektueller Erkenntnis den Sinn des Kôan-Wortes „*inga mujin*“ (wörtlich: Ursachenverknüpfung und Nicht-Ich), nämlich den dynamischen Charakter der WerdeWelt und die Nichtzweiheit von Subjekt und Objekt. Am folgenden Tag erfährt er aufgrund dieses Wortes die Erleuchtung. Während am Rande seines Bewusstseins das Kôan-Wort auftaucht, erweitert sich das All und verschmilzt mit seinem Selbst <sup>14)</sup>.

Einem Lehrer, der in der Zen-Übung trotz einiger Bemühung keinen durchschlagenden Erfolg erzielen konnte, ging das erste Licht inmitten seiner Berufsarbeit auf. Nach einer mit Examensaufgaben durchwachten Nacht kommt ihm beim Morgengrauen gegen 4 Uhr mit einem Mal die Überschrift des 19. Kôan der Sammlung Mumonkan in den Sinn, die lautet: „Das Alltägliche ist der Weg“. Ja, das ist es — den Augenblick, das Jetzt leben. „Wenn es eine Ewigkeit gibt, so ist sie in diesem Augenblick. Wer den Augenblick recht lebt, lebt die Ewigkeit. Ist nicht die Wahrheit im Augenblick, der die Ewigkeit einschliesst, — im ewigen Jetzt?“ <sup>15)</sup>. Wie die meisten luminösen Erkenntnisse so verliert auch dieses Licht rasch an Leuchtkraft, die anfänglichen guten Wirkungen schwinden dahin. Und es dauert geraume Zeit, bis der Lehrer sich erneut der Zen-Übung zuwendet. Während er an einer Übungsperiode teilnimmt, löst der Lehrvortrag des Zen-Meisters bei späterem Über-

13) Q. 2, S. 201 ff.

14) Q. 1, S. 201 f.

15) Q. 1, S. 224.



denken eine tiefe Erkenntnis aus. Er fühlt sich bei einem Spaziergang über den Tempelfriedhof und durch einen angrenzenden Schulgarten in das unzerstörbare, ewige Leben das Alls eingetaucht und verkostet die beiden Worte „Gleichheit“ (*nyô*) und „Identität“ (*soku*), die den Kern der Unterweisung am Morgen gebildet hatten. Seine Freude ist sehr gross, verliert sich aber auch diesmal bald <sup>16)</sup>. Die Freude, in der Zen-Sprache das Dharma-Entzücken (*hôteisu*) genannt, darf ebenso wenig wie die luminöse Erkenntnis mit der Erleuchtung verwechselt werden. Wohl besteht ein enger Zusammenhang zwischen der entzückten Freude und dem Erlebnis, doch sind beide voneinander verschieden. So sagt Zen-Meister Yasutani: „Wenn die Erleuchtung tief ist, ist auch die Freude gross, aber Freude und Erleuchtung sind zweierlei.“ <sup>17)</sup>.

### *Kosmisches Bewusstsein und Nichts*

Die Erlebnisberichte manifestieren die Zen-Erleuchtung als kosmisches Erlebnis. Was beim plötzlichen psychischen Durchbruch erfahren wird, ist die Alleinheit der Wirklichkeit unter Einschluss oder durch Ausweitung des Selbst, und zwar in einer unbeschreiblichen und deshalb auch von den Erleuchteten nicht beschriebenen Weise. Man kann die Zen-Erfahrung am ehesten mit den Erlebnissen des sogenannten „kosmischen Bewusstseins“ vergleichen, das im Falle der Zen-Erleuchtung durch die mahayanistische Grundlehre von der universalen Buddha-Natur in allen Lebewesen eine Präzisierung im Sinne der Heiligkeit und ursprünglichen Reinheit der alleinigen Wirklichkeit erfährt <sup>18)</sup>. Eine besondere Färbung empfängt das Zen-Erlebnis über-

16) Q. 1, S. 232 f.

17) Q. 2, S. 14.

18) Der Ausdruck „kosmisches Bewusstsein“ (cosmic consciousness) findet sich, wie es scheint, zuerst bei dem kanadischen Psychiater R. M. Bucke in der Beschreibung seines eigenen Erlebnisses. W. James bringt in seinem Standardwerk „The Varieties of Religious Experience“ (New York-London 1902, S. 308 ff.) Buckes kosmisches Bewusstsein in Zusammenhang zur östlichen Mystik in Yoga und Buddhismus. R. C. Zaehner hält Buckes kosmisches Bewusstsein für identisch mit dem „kollektiven Unbewussten“ von C. G. Jung und dem „Geist des Ganzen“ von A. Huxley (in *Mysticism Sacred and Profane*, Oxford 1957, S. 43 f.) und zählt es zur profanen Naturmystik, die er von der monistischen Mystik unterscheidet (a.a.O., S. 27 ff.). Das Erleuchtungserlebnis des Zen-Buddhismus zeigt sowohl naturmystische als auch monistische Wesenszüge und wird in der Zen-Tradition religiös verstanden. Der religiöse Charakter dieser Mystik ist besonders deutlich bei Dôgen, der in seiner Philosophie den streng monistischen Standpunkt vertritt, vgl. H. Dumoulin, *Die religiöse Metaphysik des japanischen Zen-Meisters Dôgen* in *Saeculum* Bd. 12 (1961), Heft 3, S. 205-236.

dies durch das Kôan vom Nichts, mit dessen Hilfe die meisten Zen-Übenden die Erleuchtung erlangen. Dieses Kôan, das in der negativistischen Metaphysik des Nâgârjuna gründet, wird wohl von den Übenden nur in den seltensten Fällen in seiner vollen Tragweite verstanden. Doch auch der schlichte, unreflexe Übende wird durch die besändig praktizierte radikale Verneinung aller Bestimmungen und Bezüge irgendwie in die metaphysische Sphäre hineinversetzt, in der es um Sein und Nicht-Sein geht. Aus der Lust des Verneinens wird im dialektischen Umschlag die Leidenschaft der Bejahung geboren, die nach dem Absoluten auslangt. So ist das kosmische Bewusstsein im Zen-Buddhismus in die Nähe der „*theologia negativa*“ gerückt, der die buddhistische Philosophie die stärksten Impulse verdankt.

Das Erlebnis bricht auf, wenn der Reifeprozess vollendet ist. Der Ausreifung dient die sich intensivierende Kôan-Übung, bei der alle körperlichen und seelischen Fähigkeiten des Übenden auf das Nichts hingelenkt sind. Der Körper ist in der Hockstellung aufrecht gestrafft. Mit starker Stimmkraft stösst der Übende aus den Tiefen des Unterleibes heraus den Laut „mu“ aus, der dem Wortsinn nach „Nichts“ bedeutet. Oder er starrt mit dem Auge seiner Einbildungskraft unverwandt auf das Bild des chinesischen Schriftzeichens für „Nichts“. Mit der körperlichen Anstrengung verbindet sich die psychische Bemühung. Im Augenblick der Höchstspannung springt die Schale gleichsam auf und die kosmische Dimension erscheint. Oft bleibt im Erlebnis eine Besonderheit von der Ausgangssituation oder der verherrschenden Problematik her. So war ein in den Naturwissenschaften und der Technik beheimateter Ingenieur von der Ichzentrik des modernen Menschen betroffen. Im Erlebnis erfährt er die Nichtigkeit des Ichs. Zuvor schildert er das Aufbrechen des Erlebnisses aus der Kôan-Konzentration: „Die Papiertür vor mir ist nichts, auch das Bewusstsein ist nichts, der Gedanke am Vortage, mit dem Grossen Wesen eins geworden zu sein, ist nichts. Nichts mehr ist da ausser dem ‘Nichts’. Ein Augenblick oder die Ewigkeit? Ich erstaunte, dass unvermerkt ich selbst und die Zen-Halle im absoluten Licht erstrahlten.“ Dabei empfindet er ein unsagbares Glücksgefühl: „So ist es gut“. Im nächsten Augenblick führt ihn die Reflexion zum Ausgangspunkt seiner Übung zurück: „Das Selbst, an das ich mich angeklammert hatte, war ursprünglich nirgendwo. Aber unverändert steht das (Sutra-) Wort: ‘Im Himmel und unter dem Himmel bin ich allein der Erhabene.’ Sind nicht die Schiebe-

türen der Zen-Halle der Erhabene, tanzen nicht die Strohmatte unter den Füßen des Erhabenen, leuchten nicht die dunkelroten Ahornblätter im Licht des Erhabenen? Das All ist umhüllt vom Erhabenen, der Erhabene lebt im All.“<sup>19)</sup>

Das Aufgehen aller Dinge im Nichts und die Gleichheit von Nichts, All und Buddha finden sich in vielen Erlebnisberichten wieder. In der Erzählung einer buddhistischen Nonne zittert die heftige Gefühlsregung nach, die ein solches Erlebnis auslösen kann. „Ah, nun kann ich das Schriftzeichen ‘Nichts’ erblicken, die Welt des Nichts ist wirklich sichtbar geworden. Das Ticken der Uhr, der Laut der Stockschläge, der Glockenton üben zusammen mit mir das Nichts. Auch der Bodhisattva ist nichts, die Äbtissin ist nichts, ich selbst bin nichts, die Menschen in der Meditationshalle sind alle nichts. Was immer ich sehe und höre, nichts ist, was nicht nichts wäre . . .“ Nach dem Erlebnis, das durch das Schriftzeichen für einen Stimmlaut ohne inhaltliche Bedeutung angedeutet ist, weiss sie: „Das All ist eins, Himmel und Erde sind von gleicher Wurzel, alle Dinge sind eins. Ah, wie beglückend!“<sup>20)</sup>

Eine andere Nonne klagt beim Alleingehen ihren Mißerfolg: „Wie immer ich sie anschauen mag, die Papierfenster sehen nur wie Papierfenster aus.“ „Papierfenster sind halt Papierfenster“, wird ihr zur Antwort. In diesem Augenblick entfährt ihr der spontane Ausruf der Erleuchtung. „Ob ich den Buddha sehe, ob ich die Äbtissin sehe, ob ich das Hockkissen sehe, alles ist zu „Nichts“ geworden. Das Nichts dehnt sich unbehindert unendlich aus und ist überall eines.“<sup>21)</sup> Ganz ähnlich schildert der folgende Erlebnisbericht ohne besondere Originalität, aber sehr typisch den Umschlag vom Nichts zum All und die Einschmelzung der gesamten Wirklichkeit ins Nichts: „Am Papierfenster fliegt ein kleines Insekt, es ist nichts. Am Himmel das Flugzeug ist nichts. Das ganze All wird zu nichts. Indessen verwischt sich das Gefüge des Papierfensters und wird unkenntlich. Der Leib sinkt in bodenlose Tiefe. Da erklingt der Gong. In diesem Augenblick ein spontaner Ausruf. Ich komme zu mir. Die Welt, die ich erfasst habe, Himmel und Erde sind eins. Ich und das All sind eins. Der Buddha und ich sind gleich, eine Einheit — nichts.“<sup>22)</sup>

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19) Q. 1, S. 215.

20) Q. 3, S. 222 f.

21) Q. 3, S. 193.

22) Q. 3, S. 36 f.

*Naturalistische Färbung*

Der Japaner lebte bis vor nicht langer Zeit und lebt auch heute noch auf dem Lande in einer innigen Naturverbundenheit und bringt so gewissermassen eine entfernte Vorbereitung für das kosmische Erlebnis mit. In manchen Erlebnisberichten drängt ein reiches Naturgefühl in den Ausdruck. Eine Frau wird plötzlich des Erlebnisses inne: „Wie ich beim Glockenschlag aufmerke, ist mein Selbst, das übte, Buddha. Wie ein Wasserfall stürzen in diesem Augenblick die Tränen aus meinen Augen . . . Ich hocke wie ein hoher Berg, unbeweglich, wie viele Stockschläge auch fallen, in immer tieferer Ruhe, in immer lauterer Klarheit. Während ich auf das ‘Nichts’ hinstarre, vernehme ich den Ton der Regentropfen und des Windes, der durch die Blätter der Bäume streift, und Schritte in der Nacht. Aus weiter Ferne klingt eine helle Vogelstimme. Schon wird es Tag, und in der Morgensonne glänzt der Tau auf den Blätterspitzen. Tropfen um Tropfen stürzt gleichsam die ganze Sonne herab. Ah, welche Herrlichkeit! Ah, diese Pracht, diese Weite ist Nichts, wie das grosse Meer so ist alles nichts. Aus Leibesgrund quellen einsam meine Tränen.“<sup>23)</sup>

Die modernen Zen-Jünger folgen den Altmeistern nach, wenn sie ihr Naturerleben in dichterische Sprache formen. Dôgen dichtete aus der Erleuchtungsschau die Verse:

„Die Farbe des Berghanges und das Rauschen des Talwassers,  
alles ist meine Stimme und meine Gestalt Shâkyamunis.“

Eine Jüngerin des Meisters Yasutani begriff in ihrem Erlebnis diese Verse Dôgens: „Ja, meine Stimme und meine Gestalt. Ich bin Shâkyamuni. Der herrliche Himmel, das Paradies und das Reine Land, die Stimme der Vögel und Frösche, das frische Laub am Berghang, die tanzenden Schmetterlinge, alles ist nichts, nur nichts.“<sup>24)</sup>

Eine andere Jüngerin wird nach einem schwachen Erlebnis, einem „leichten Anfang gleich einem Sandkorn im weiten Meer“, zu eifrigerer Übung ermuntert. Je intensiver sie sich der Hockmeditation hingibt, um so weiter dehnt sich die Lichtflut aus und ergreift sie immer tiefer. Nun dichtet sie das japanische Lied:

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23) Q. 3, S. 70.

24) Q. 1, S. 181.

„Lautlos, duftlos Himmel und Erde  
beständig wiederholen ungeschriebene Sutren“ 25).

### *Plötzliche Auslösung*

Das Erlebnis kommt plötzlich, meistens durch sichere Vorzeichen angekündigt. Oft wird es durch einen visuellen oder auditiven Sinnes-  
eindruck ausgelöst. Wir lesen vom Aufblitzen der Erleuchtung beim  
Vernehmen des Tones der Abendglocke 26) oder des Schlagens einer  
Uhr 27) oder draussen niederprasselnden Regens 28). Auch beim Ge-  
troffenwerden von einem plötzlichen Stockschlag ist wohl weniger der  
Schmerz, der in diesem Stadium der Übung kaum mehr gespürt wird,  
als vielmehr der klatschende Ton die auslösende Veranlassung 29).  
Nicht selten stellt sich das Erlebnis bei der Aussprache mit dem Meister  
ein. Es ist dann buchstäblich ein Aug in Auge von Meister und Jünger.  
Der Meister fixiert mit scharfem Blick den Jünger, um den feinen  
Spalt in seinem bewussten Seelenleben zu erspähen, durch den der  
Weg ins Innere führt. Man hat diese Situation mit dem Picken der  
Henne an der Oberfläche der Eierschale verglichen, während an deren  
Innenseite das Küken den Weg in die Freiheit aufklopft. Besonders  
die Berichte der Jünger und Jüngerinnen der Äbtissin sind reich an  
reizvollen Schilderungen, die das ungewöhnliche Geschick dieser Frau  
bezeugen. Einen Übenden fragte sie beim Alleingehen am siebten Tag  
der Übungsperiode: „Wie ist es mit dem Nichts?“ „Ich weiss es nicht“,  
antwortete der Jünger, ein junger Mann, der nur mit äusserster Mühe  
die Strenge der Übung ertrug. „Wie ist es mit dem Nichts?“, fragt  
ihn die Äbtissin zum zweiten Mal und schlägt ihm mit dem Stock  
scharf auf die Kniee. In diesem Augenblick entfährt ihm der Ausruf  
der Erleuchtung. „Plötzlich fühle ich, dass es hell geworden ist. Ah,  
es ist das Nichts, dieses ist nichts und jenes ist nichts“ 30). Ein anderes

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25) Q. 3, S. 11.

26) Q. 3, S. 186 f. Zaehner hat die bemerkenswerte Tatsache herausgestellt,  
dass die Grundlage des grossen Romans von Marcel Proust „A la recherche du  
temps perdu“ eine ausserordentliche naturmystische Erfahrung bildet, die ähnlich  
wie viele Zen-Erlebnisse durch einen zufälligen äusseren Schock (ungleiche Pflas-  
tersteine, Klang eines Löffels u.a.) veranlasst ist (a.a.O. S. 57 ff.).

27) Q. 3, S. 61.

28) Q. 3, S. 217.

29) Beispiele s. Q. 3, S. 57; 3, S. 112; 3, S. 160; 3, S. 275.

30) Q. 3, S. 115.

Mal berührt die Äbtissin mit dem Stock die Nasenspitze einer Übenden<sup>31)</sup>, oder sie weist mit dem Stock auf ein schwarzes Brett, das hinter ihrem Rücken hängt<sup>32)</sup>. Jeweils löst der ungewöhnliche Gestus das plötzliche Erlebnis aus, das kosmisch verstanden wird. „Ich war mit dem grossen All eins geworden“, so beschreibt die zuletzt genannte Jüngerin ihre Erfahrung. „Ob ich nach oben oder zur Seite blickte, überall dehnte es sich unendlich, weit, weit. Schliesslich fiel ich kopf-über zu Boden“.

Weil die Aussprache mit dem Meister den Durchbruch des Erlebnis wirksam befördert, werden diese Aussprachen gegen Ende der Übung immer zahlreicher. Wie eine sorgsame Hebamme ist der Meister zur Stelle, wenn die Geburtswehen einsetzen. Eine Übende bittet im letzten Stadium in kurzer Aufeinanderfolge nicht weniger als fünfmal um Führung im Alleingehen. Zuerst empfängt sie die energische Mahnung, ohne Nachlassen weiter zu üben, koste es, was es wolle. „Du stirbst gewiss nicht dabei, nur keine Sorge, sondern voran“! Bei zwei folgenden Alleingehen wird sie kurz abgefertigt und zur Fortsetzung der Übung zurückgesandt. Bei der vierten Aussprache erhält sie die ermunternde Versicherung, dass nur noch ein dünner Papierstreifen sie von der Einheit trennt, also Durchhalten! Doch bald schon fliegt sie wiederum zur Äbtissin, wie vom Nichts berauscht. Als aber die Äbtissin sie fragt: „Was ist das Nichts?“, muss sie gestehen: „Ich weiss es nicht“. Die Äbtissin fragt abermals und fixiert sie mit scharfem Blick: „Was ist das Nichts?“ In diesem Augenblick kommt ihr die Erleuchtung, die sie als Einheit mit der Äbtissin und dem All erfährt<sup>33)</sup>.

Die Übungsperiode ist zweifellos besonders dazu geeignet, jene hohen Konzentrationsgrade zu erreichen, die für das Erlebnis erfordert sind. Doch kann dieses auch ausserhalb der Übungsperiode eintreten. Der Bericht eines höheren Staatsbeamten, der zu Hause die Erleuchtung erfuhr, gehört zu den erregendsten der Sammlung. Dieser hochgebildete Zen-Jünger hatte sich in früher Jugend für die japanischen Altmeister der Zen begeistert. Als Student erlag er für eine Weile dem Zauber des Marxismus. Nach Eintritt ins Berufsleben beschäftigte er sich intensiv mit der Philosophie Nishidas, näherte sich dem Zen-

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31) Q. 3, S. 257.

32) Q. 3, S. 198.

33) Q. 3, S. 206 f.

Buddhismus und vertiefte sich in die zenistischen Quellschriften, vorab Hekiganroku und Shushôgi. Zur praktischen Übung schloss er sich einer Gruppe von Laienbuddhisten an, die regelmässig meditierten. So kam er in Kontakt mit Meister Yasutani und dessen Jüngerkreis. Als Aufgabe erhielt er das Kôan vom „ursprünglichen Antlitz“. Nun machte er es sich zur Regel, täglich morgens und abends je 30 Minuten zu meditieren. Er tat dies mit solcher Beharrlichkeit und Energie, dass er rasch die Disposition für das Erlebnis in sich ausbildete. An manchen Tagen verlängerte er die Meditationszeit. Was ihm dabei widerfuhr, erzählt er selbst, wie folgt: „An jenem Abend übte ich mehr als eine Stunde, am nächsten Tag mehr als zwei Stunden. Am folgenden Tag, dem 3. Mai, sollte ich meine Frau bis um 3 Uhr nachmittags aus dem Krankenhaus abholen. Am Vormittag übte ich eine Stunde, am Mittag hockte ich um 12.15 Uhr wieder zur Meditation hin in der Absicht, etwa 30 Minuten zu üben... Mit Leib und Geist rang ich mit dem ‘ursprünglichen Antlitz’. Nach ungefähr 30 Minuten merkte ich, dass mein Atem schwer ging und es vor meinen Augen dunkel wurde. Das ist es, denke ich, strenge den ganzen Körper an und hocke weiter. Doch plötzlich beginnt mein ganzer Körper zu zittern, vor meinen Augen ist schwarzes Dunkel, nichts ist mehr sichtbar, mein Denken ist abgeschnitten, Vergangenheit und Zukunft vergessen, nur meine Tränen fliessen in Strömen. Unbewusst rufe ich aus und weine. Das ursprüngliche Antlitz existiert nicht mehr, alles ist zerbrochen. Als das Zittern aufhört, bin ich bloss ganz geistesabwesend. Wie ich aufmerke und hinschaue, ist es gerade 1 Uhr. Das ursprüngliche Antlitz, das bis jetzt wie ein Silberberg und eine Eisenwand vor meinem Blick emporragte, ist verschwunden. Auf dem Grunde meines Geistes hat es sich verwandelt in ‘Es war gar nicht da’ und ‘So wie es jetzt ist, ist es gut’. Mit einem Mal hat es sich ohne Logik und Verstandesgrübeln verändert. Ich fühle mich an wie ganz und gar abgewaschen. Was ist dies? Sollte es die Erleuchtung sein?...“ Der Meister, der zur Zeit dieses Ereignisses verreist war, unterzog diesen Laienjünger nach seiner Rückkehr einer gründlichen Prüfung, aufgrund deren er die Echtheit des Erlebnisses anerkannte <sup>34)</sup>).

#### *Begleiterscheinungen*

Die Gefühlsexaltation, nach den vorliegenden Berichten eine gewöhn-

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<sup>34)</sup> Q. 2, S. 162 f.

liche Begleiterscheinung des Erlebnisses, äussert sich im allgemeinen in Ausbrüchen ekstatischer Freude und selbstvergessenen Entzückens. Nur in seltenen Fällen fehlt die Freude ganz. Doch sind, wie wir schon sahen, Dharma-Entzücken und Erlebnis nicht identisch. Noch weniger können andere Exaltationsgefühle, die hie und da auftreten, als Wesensmerkmale des Erleuchtungserlebnisses angesehen werden. Manchen Erleuchteten erscheint die Welt wie von übersinnlichem Licht überflutet und verklärt. Öfters zeigen sich Levitationsgefühle, eine schwebende Leichtigkeit und transparente Helligkeit der Körper. Die Zen-Jünger selbst schenken solchen Phänomenen weniger Beachtung, da ihre Aufmerksamkeit vom kosmischen Nichts absorbiert ist. Die folgende Aufzeichnung einer Nonne ist in dieser Hinsicht typisch. „Ich hatte mich selbst vergessen. Ah, dies ist es, dies ist es. Es ist nichts, es ist nichts. Himmel und Erde werden im Augenblick hell, mein Körper ist plötzlich leicht geworden. Ich fühle mich, als ob ich bis an die Grenzen der Himmels fliegen könnte. Alles ist nichts, mit gefalteten Händen verehere ich das Nichts“<sup>35</sup>). Eine andere Nonne, die beim Alleingehen im Augenblick, als sie einen Stockschlag verspürte, die Erleuchtung erfuhr, schreibt: „Das ist es, das ist es, mein Körper war plötzlich ganz leicht geworden und schnellte empor“<sup>36</sup>).

Die Begleiterscheinungen des Erlebnisses werden klar von den Trugbildern im sogenannten „Teufelsbereich“ (*makyô*) unterschieden und im Gegensatz zu diesen von den Zen-Meistern wegen ihrer Nähe zur Erleuchtung hoch eingeschätzt. „Ah, hier ist der Eintritt in die Wirklichkeit so wie sie ist!“, ruft begeistert ein Übender, dessen erstauntem Blick der in wunderbarem Glanz leuchtende Klostergarten ein unbeschreibliches Schauspiel darbietet. Nach vollem Durchbruch des Erlebnisses sieht er „alle Dinge in lebensvoller Bewegung und gleichsam zum Anschauen einladend. Die Dinge sind an ihrem Orte oder sie wohnen sicher am Orte und scheinen zu atmen. Ich konnte die Existenz einer Welt, die unsere Erkenntnis nicht betritt, entdecken. Unvergleichlich schön leuchtete die Farbe einer Blume am Altar des Bodhisattva Manjushri“<sup>37</sup>). Einem anderen Erleuchteten erscheinen seine Gefährten wie Bodhisattvas. Der Bodhisattva in der Mitte der Zen-

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35) Q. 3, S. 152.

36) Q. 3, S. 160.

37) Q. 1, S. 193 f.



Halle lächelt ihm zu. Und „Licht strömt vom Körper des Meisters aus“ 38).

*„Die Wurzel des Nichts“*

Die Zen-Meister mahnen nach Erlangung einer ersten schwachen Erfahrung zu weiterer Übung und veranschaulichen die Gradunterschiede im Erlebnis gern an den Ochsenbildern aus der Blütezeit des chinesischen Zen. Das anfängliche Erlebnis ist ähnlich dem Auffinden der Spur des Ochsen durch den Hirten. Die Spur kann leicht wieder verloren gehen. Deshalb kommt es darauf an, ein schwaches Erlebnis zu intensivieren. Meister Yasutani unterscheidet zwischen dem Erfassen des Nichts und der „Wurzel des Nichts“ und ermuntert seine Jünger, bis zum Erfassen des Wurzelgrundes vorzudringen. So mahnt er einen Jünger, dessen Erlebnis er als echt anerkennt: „Du hast das Nichts schon erfasst, nun sieh die Wurzel des Nichts“ 39)! Die Wurzel des Nichts ist die Quelle unbegrenzter Vitalität, während das begriffliche „tote Nichts“ wertlos ist 40). Das Nichts der Erfahrung ist nicht tot, aber erst beim Erfassen seiner Wurzel wird seine ganze Dynamik offenbar.

Ein Postbeamter aus Nordjapan, der sich mit existentiellern Ernst der Zen-Übung hingab, erfuhr die verschiedenen Intensitätsgrade des Erlebnisses. Zuerst sah er visuell das Schriftzeichen Nichts. Dabei empfand er eine so starke Freude, dass er schon die Erleuchtung erfasst zu haben glaubte. Bei der folgenden Übungsperiode sah er das Nichts wieder und zwar sogleich am ersten Tage und deutlicher als zuvor. Bald wurde ihm nun alles zu nichts. Der Meister überzeugte sich von der Echtheit des Erlebnisses und mahnte: „Nun sieh die Wurzel des Nichts“! Mit höchstem Eifer übte er weiter, und neue Erlebnisse kamen, die aber vom Meister nicht als Erfassen der Wurzel des Nichts anerkannt wurden. Bis es ihn plötzlich überwältigte: „Mit einem Griff packte ich die Wurzel. Das war gleich der Selbstexplosion eines Feuerballs“. Darauf entspann sich zwischen ihm und dem Meister das folgende Gespräch, das an die klassischen Zen-Geschichten erinnert. „Bist du mit der Wurzel hergekommen?“, fragt der Meister. „Ja“. So zeige sie mir vor“! Der Jünger zaudert noch, während der Meister losbrüllt:

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38) Q. 1, S. 173.

39) Q. 2, S. 60.

40) Q. 2, S. 205.

„Katsu“. „In diesem Augenblick“, so fährt der Bericht fort, „wurde mein Unterleib hart wie ein Diamantstein, glühend wie im Feuer. Als der Meister mich weiter drängt: ‘So zeige doch!’, schlage ich mit der Faust auf meinen Leib, dass es laut schallt und rufe: ‘Das ist es!’..... Ich hatte gewiss die Wurzel des Nichts gesehen, nach dreijähriger Übung hatte ich mein ursprüngliches Antlitz gesehen“ 41).

Das ursprüngliche Antlitz offenbart dem Zen-Jünger sein wahres Selbst, zu dem hin er seit dem ersten Aufbruch unterwegs ist. In vielen kosmischen Erlebnissen ist die Erfassung des Selbst ausdrücklich als Wesenselement der Erfahrung genannt. Diese Seite des Erlebnisses zeigt sich besonders klar im Bericht einer frommen Buddhistin, der sich die Frage nach dem Wesen der Dinge zur Frage nach der wahren Gestalt der Kannon verdichtete. Im Augenblick der Erleuchtung begreift sie das Nichts und zugleich „die wahre Gestalt der Kannon und die wahre Gestalt des Selbst, ja die wahre Gestalt aller Dinge. Alles ist eins. Was immer einer auch sagen mag, hier gibt es kein Zurückweichen. Ich hatte erlangt, das ursprüngliche Selbst zu durchschauen“ 42).

Je mächtiger das Erlebnis packt, um so mehr gerät der Mensch ins Strömen, und zwar nach Innen in der Richtung des Wurzelgrundes sowohl als nach Aussen in eruptiven Ekstasen. Der Bericht eines Zen-Jüngers über seine zweite Erleuchtung erinnert in der Mächtigkeit des Erlebens an die Ekstasen des berühmten Zen-Meisters Hakuin. Dieser Zen-Jünger, ein buddhistischer Laie, hatte sich schon während seiner Studentenjahre mit den Schriften Hakuins vertraut gemacht. Die erste Erleuchtung erfuhr er im Rinzaï-Kloster Engakuji von Kamakura unter der Leitung des Abtes Asahina. Später kam er in Verbindung mit der Harada-Schule und verspürte das Bedürfnis nach weiterer systematischer Übung. Die zweite grosse Erleuchtung überraschte ihn ausserhalb der Tempelhallen in der elektrischen Schnellbahn zwischen Tokyo und Kamakura, als er bei der Lektüre einer Zen-Schrift auf das Wort Dôgens stiess: „Ich weiss es klar: Der Geist ist Berge, Ströme und die Grosse Erde, Sonne, Mond und Sterne“. Das Wort war ihm seit langem bekannt, aber diesmal packte es ihn mit Macht. Aus seinen Augen stürzten Tränenströme, die er

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41) Q. 1, S. 151 ff.

42) Q. 3, S. 245 f.

durch ein Taschentuch zu verbergen suchte. Das Erlebnis dauerte in voller Stärke an, während er vom Bahnhof Kamakura über einen Seitenweg zu seiner Wohnung heimfand. Nach dem Abendessen und einem Bad begab er sich zur Ruhe, um nach kurzem Schlaf zu erwachen. Und nun erst kommt mit elementarer Gewalt der volle Ausbruch. Wieder trifft das Wort Dôgens seinen Geist, aber „in diesem Augenblick durchfährt es wie ein Blitzschlag den ganzen Leib. Himmel und Erde zerrinnen. Wie aufräuschende Sturzwellen bricht unverzüglich die grosse Freude auf“. Er stösst einen Schrei aus und bricht in mächtiges Lachen aus. Das ist kein blosses Vernünfteln, und wieder lacht er laut auf. Er ist aufgestanden, reisst an den Decken und stampft mit beiden Knien das Bett. Frau und Kind sind in die höchste Bestürzung geraten. Die Frau versucht, ihm mit beiden Händen den Mund zuzuhalten, während das Kind meint, der Vater sei wahnsinnig geworden. „Ich habe die Erleuchtung erfasst, der Buddha und die Patriarchen täuschen nicht“, so ruft er nach einer Weile aus. Aber der ganze Vorgang, der ihm eine beträchtliche Zeitspanne ausgefüllt zu haben schien, dauerte, wie seine Frau später versicherte, nicht mehr als 2-3 Minuten. Als er sich einigermaßen beruhigt hat, bringt er vor dem Bild der Kannon in Dankbarkeit Weihrauch dar. Doch noch tagelang zitterte in seinem Körper die überheftige Erregung nach <sup>43</sup>).

Was bei diesem Erlebnis an Hakuin denken lässt, ist ausser der ungewöhnlichen Wucht der Erfahrung das akute Erleben des ekstatischen Aussersichseins. Das Erlebnis überfällt den Zen-Jünger und quillt in starken Stössen immer wieder auf. Wie bei Hakuin folgen auf die ausführlich beschriebene grosse Ekstase zahlreiche kleinere Erfahrungen, die die Freude und das Bewusstsein der Einheit mit dem Buddha verstärken. Dem Zen-Jünger fallen unwillkürlich Vergleiche und Wortprägungen aus den Schriften der Altmeister ein. „Der Buddha ist in Bewegung geraten“. „Alle Dinge fliessen frei, wie der Fisch im Wasser schwimmt“. Er erfährt, was die Altmeister das „Ausfallen von Geist und Leib“ nannten und fühlt sich mitten im zenistischen Traditionsstrom <sup>44</sup>).

Bei der Durchprüfung zahlreicher Erlebnisberichte erhebt sich not-

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43) Q. 2, S. 212 ff.

44) Q. 2, S. 221 f.

wendig eine Frage, die wir zum Schluss wenigstens anmelden möchten. Sind alle Satori-Erlebnisse im Zen untereinander völlig gleich, insbesondere sind die Erlebnisse aus neuerer Zeit identisch mit jenen Erleuchtungen, von denen die Chroniken und Spruchsammlungen der Altmeister erzählen? Die Zen-Meister, gleich ob in früher oder heutiger Zeit, kennen meines Wissens keine qualitativen Verschiedenheiten, sondern nur verschiedene Intensitätsgrade der wesentlich gleichen Erleuchtung. Übrigens sind sich die modernen Zen-Meister, zum mindesten in der Praxis nicht darüber einig, welche Mindestforderungen an ein Satori gestellt werden müssen. Wir haben im vorigen das Phänomen der Zen-Erleuchtung aufgrund zahlreicher Erlebnisberichte von Zen-Jüngern zu verdeutlichen gesucht. Die Frage nach der qualitativen Gleichheit oder Verschiedenheit der Erlebnisse hängt wie alle Wesensfragen bezüglich der Erleuchtung mit der Gesamtbeurteilung der Zen-Mystik zusammen.

# KINSHIP RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE EARLY HEBREWS

BY

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It would appear that the stories of the patriarchs fit authentically into the period of the second millenium B.C. rather than into that of any later period, so far as the evidence can inform us <sup>1)</sup>. More particularly, the narratives in Genesis chapters 12 to 50 reflect a period between the twentieth and the sixteenth centuries, though some scholars would place the patriarchal age considerably later (Cf. G. H. Gordan, *Introduction to Old Testament Times* (pp. 75, 102 ff.)). Important as evidence in this field are two factors, namely the early Hebrew names and the customs of the patriarchs, together with their general mode of life.

The early Hebrew names fit well into a class known to be current in Mesopotamia and Palestine, especially among the Amorite element in the population, as Professor Albright has shown in his analysis of "Northwest-Semitic Names in a List of Egyptian Slaves from the Eighteenth Century B.C." <sup>2)</sup>. It is the second factor, however, which can provide us with a fascinating picture of the manner of life and the family practices of the patriarchal period. An investigation into the social arrangements of that age may well provide us with fresh light on later Hebrew social practice.

In the earliest known historical times, the Hebrews, like other Semitic peoples, had a firmly established patriarchal society. There are some traces, however, that this patriarchal system was superimposed upon an earlier social arrangement, whereby descent took place through the female line. The mother named the child and it is only in the 8th

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1) H. H. Rowley, "Recent Discovery and the Patriarchal Age", *Bulletin of John Rylands Library*, No. 32, pp. 44-79.

2) *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, No. 74, pp. 222-233.

century, that there are stated the first certain cases of the choice of names by the father (Hosea 1. 4, 6, 9.: Isaiah 8. 3).

This older type of society in which the woman lives with her parents after marriage and has her husband to visit her or stay in her home is prominent in many early societies. Robertson Smith in his "Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia" called this form of marriage 'sadiqa marriage', in which the tent or the home belongs to the wife. This appears to be the case in the Jahwist account of human marriage in Gen. 2. 24: 'Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh'. Therefore, a union between children of the same father was permissible and was not regarded as incestuous, whereas the union between children of the same mother was abhorrent. Sarah was the daughter of Abraham's father and by her marriage to Abraham, became the mother of the son of promise but Sarah and Abraham did not have the same mother (Gen. 20. 12). Even as late as the time of David, Amnon (David's son) sought to ravish his half-sister Tamar, who replied: 'Now therefore, I pray you, speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you' (2 Sam. 13. 13). There is no indication that marriage between them would be unlawful or dishonourable, though Tamar resents being his victim in a passing fit of lust.

If the tent belonged to the woman, then it was the husband who "went into his wife", as Jacob did to Leah (Gen. 29. 23) and to Rachel (Gen. 29. 30), as well as to their maids, Zilpah and Bilhah respectively (Gen. 30. 4). Similarly, Abraham went in to Hagar, his wife's maid (Gen. 16. 4). This created a strong bond between the children of the same mother. When Abraham's servant sought to gain Rebekah's hand for Isaac, it is not only Bethuel (her father) who is consulted but her brother Laban as well (Gen. 24. 50). Similarly, when Dinah, Jacob's daughter, was ravished by Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, her brothers (Simeon and Levi) take revenge. (This incident, whether personal or tribal, indicates the sense of responsibility felt by close kin ties). It is probable that this conception of 'sadiqa marriage' continued to hold its place in Israelite practice. Moses married a Midianite woman, who stayed in her own country with her two sons (Ex. 18. 3-6), until his later return to her territory. Gideon had his wife at Shechem, though Gideon lived at Ophrah. When Gideon's son, Abimelech, wanted support for his cause, he went to his mother's kinsmen for

support (Judges 9. 1-3). To them he was able to say, "Remember also that I am your bone and your flesh", though there does not appear any such link with Abimelech's father's clan. Samson appears to have taken as wife a Timnite woman, whom he visited from time to time, presenting her with a gift, when he did so (Judges 15. 1). Marriage with father's relations, even father's sister, did not rouse disapproval, as in the case of the parents of Aaron and Moses (Ex. 6. 20). Therefore, in the relationships with the father's family, the link appears to be weak but with the mother's family, there is a strong and enduring bond at all times<sup>3</sup>). Later law forbade also union between the children of the same father as well those of the same mother (Lev. 18. 9). Some scholars have held that the term 'mishpaha' (normally translated as 'family') points to the matriarchate, as the term may originally mean 'concubine' or 'matriarchal wife', with the family as a unit based on a uterine relationship<sup>4</sup>).

However, in historical times and, in particular, by the time of the conquest, the tribal organization of Israel had been established on a patriarchal basis. This is apparent even in the narratives of the patriarchs, concerning whom much light has been given by the discovery of the Nuzi texts of the fifteenth century. These texts inform us about the customs of a predominantly Hurrian (Biblical 'Horites') population in Northern Mesopotamia, where the Hurrians secured control of an area of an older Amorite culture. Elements of the customs of the older Amorite population were probably taken over into the legal arrangements of the Hurrians.

By means of these texts, several incidents in the life of Abraham are clarified. The need for an heir is prominent in the story of Abraham as well as in Hurrian society. But provision was made, as these texts indicate, whereby a favoured slave or adopted child might be legally entitled to become the heir, if there was no natural issue, which Abraham anticipated that he might have to do in the case of his home-born slave, Eliezer of Damascus (Gen. 15. 1-4). If a natural son was born to Abraham, then the adopted son would have to give precedence to the natural son. Another text gives a marriage contract, which has a clause whereby if the wife is unable to provide an heir, she shall

3) A. Lods, *Israel*, (1930), (Eng. trans. by S. Hooke (1932), pp. 192-4.

4) Cf. H. H. Rowley, *Record and Revelation*, (ed. H. W. Robinson) (1938), pp. 161-2.

provide a concubine for her husband who may give him an heir on her behalf. In one contract, it is specified that the concubine provided is not to be any cheap slave but an Egyptian. Thus, Sarah gave her slave Hagar the Egyptian to Abraham, saying, "Go in to my maid; it may be that I shall obtain children by her" (Gen. 16. 1-4). This gave a privileged position to Hagar but did not displace Sarah from her place as chief wife. When Sarah appealed against the contempt of Hagar, Abraham reaffirmed Sarah's status and reduced Hagar to her ordinary status as a slave (Gen. 16. 6a). This punishment for a slave-mother who has a child by her master and then presumes on her position is found in the Code of Hammurabi (paragraph 146, which states that "if later that female slave has claimed equality with her mistress because she bore children, her mistress may not sell her; she may mark her with the slave-mark, and count her among the slaves" <sup>4a</sup>). Other legal wives in Israel, no doubt, had trouble in this matter (Prov. 30. 23). But a child of such a union with a slave could not be expelled from the home with his mother, according to Nuzi law, which may well explain Abraham's reluctance to send Hagar and Ishmael away (Gen. 21. 10 f).

When Isaac was born, he became the heir and took due precedence over Ishmael, the slave's son. As a Nuzi text points out, "to the sons (of the main wife) shall be given the lands and buildings of every sort" <sup>5</sup>). Although he was the son of promise, Isaac has no great part in the narrative. The Priestly narrative refers to his circumcision (Gen. 21. 4) and the Elohist writer gives great prominence to the testing of Abraham, who in obedience is willing to offer up this chosen son in sacrifice. This narrative indicates the break with human sacrifice which took place in Israel, presumably far earlier than in the surrounding nations. Abraham's place as the father of the faithful is also emphasised in the same account (Gen. 22. 16-18). Abraham is depicted as the father of all who later believe (Rom. 4. 11). This is seen also when Sarah dies and needs burial.

Although Abraham is promised the land, yet he remained a 'sojourner', dwelling in tents. Yet, it is pointed out, the patriarchs were not entirely "strangers" because they did come to own a plot of earth,

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4a) I. B. Pritchard, *ANET* (Ancient Near Eastern Texts), p. 172.

5) J. B. Pritchard, *ANET*, p. 220.



namely, the burial place of the Cave of Machpelah, which Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hittite (Gen. 23). This was an 'earnest' of the later fuller possession, which Abraham's heirs were to receive. This narrative is commonly assigned to P and therefore to a late date but it may well reflect much older material, as it is paralleled in Hittite law, which is found in the Boghazkoy texts (14th cent. B.C.). Under this law, feudal obligation was linked to real property ownership rather than to the person <sup>6</sup>).

This plot of land, which is usually identified with the cave under the mosque at Hebron, was used not only for the burial of Sarah but also for Abraham (25. 9), Isaac (35. 29), Rebekah and Leah (49. 31) and also Jacob (50. 13). Apart from this possession and possibly, a few cultivated areas (Gen. 26. 12), the patriarchs were ass-nomads, for whom even the camel may have been a later adoption, an anachronism introduced at a later date for contemporary readers (cf. Gen. 12. 16, 24).

But in regard to marital custom, Isaac has to have a bride from within the kin (Gen. 24. 38). As among many Hamite peoples today, the bride chosen is from his father's brother's family. This bride, Rebekah, is the daughter of the youngest son (Bethuel) of Nahor, Abraham's brother. This preference for the younger or youngest son is a notable feature in the Old Testament of the doctrine of Election. Here it is the daughter of the younger son. Jacob is the younger brother (Gen. 25. 26). Joseph was the elder son of Rachel but a younger son of the family (Gen. 37. 3). David was similarly the youngest son (1. Sam. 16. 11). Rebekah is chosen from Bethuel's family to be the bride of Isaac, where she dwells in the tent of his mother (Gen. 24. 67).

The importance of the kinship ties is seen most clearly in the Jacob saga, upon which the Nuzi tablets have thrown much light. The story of the sale of the birthright by Esau (Gen. 25. 29-34) may be compared with the Nuzi account, in which one brother sells a grove, which he has inherited, for three sheep. With an eye on the later inheritance, Jacob offers food to his famished brother, Esau, but Jacob says, "Swear to me first". So Esau swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob (Gen. 25. 33). This was a presage of further trouble between them.

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6) Ibid, pp. 188-197 (especially paragraphs 46-47).

The crisis between the brothers came over the gift of the 'blessing', which was deemed to be an inheritable asset — a power which could be passed down from father to son. The blessing was "a power of the soul which lived on in the psychic community of the family" (J. Pedersen, *Israel*, 1, p. 190). As the 'blessing' was with Abraham (Gen. 22. 17), so it passed to Isaac (Gen. 26. 3, 24), who was able to pass it on to his sons. This 'blessing' was regarded as an active power, so that if the rights of its holder were violated, then punishment fell upon the violator. Thus, when Abimelech attempted to take Sarah, he was threatened with disaster (Gen. 20. 3), just as in a parallel experience attributed to Isaac, Abimelech recognized that Isaac's success is a power to be treated with care, as he is the "blessed of the Lord" (Gen. 26. 29).

Although he was the younger brother, Jacob greatly desired to have this gift. His mother, whose favourite he was, also wanted him to receive it. As the gift was a double-edged one, bringing disaster on the unworthy, Jacob was fearful lest it might bring him under a curse instead of a blessing (Gen. 27. 12). His mother put his fears to rest. She told him that any ill-result would fall upon her. After this incident, she did in fact never see her son again. Jacob carried out her orders and received the 'blessing' from his father, who when he learned what had happened realized that the gift could not be recalled (Gen. 27. 35). This brought bitter conflict between the brothers, so that Jacob had to find some place of safety elsewhere.

One of the basic patterns which is found in primitive society is the "custom of privileged familiarity of a sister's son towards his mother's brother which is found in some peoples of Africa, Oceania and North America" 7). Therefore, it was fitting that Rebekah should advise her son to go to stay with her brother. Moreover, marriage with a mother's brother's daughter in such society is a widespread form of preferred marriage. This involves two important sociological principles. Firstly, such marriage was preferred as contrasexually (*i.e.* from a son through his mother (a woman) through her brother (a man) to the mother's brother's daughter (a woman), who becomes the son's bride). Secondly, such marriage serves as a satisfactory form of

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7) A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde (edd), *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* (1950), p. 83. (Cf. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), Chap. I. "The Mother's Brother in South Africa").

compensation, almost on the basis of exchange. A man who marries exogamously (out of his group) thereby deprives her group of her services. But his daughter returns to the maternal group when she weds her maternal uncle's son. Thus a proper balance is kept between the two groups<sup>8</sup>). Rebekah and Isaac therefore bid Jacob their son seek a wife from among the daughters of Rebekah's brother, Laban (Gen. 27. 46 and 28. 2). Similarly among the clans, who live in the Chinese countryside, one of the most favoured forms of marriage is the one with mother's brother's daughter<sup>9</sup>). Therefore, Jacob had adequate cause in family custom to leave his home to go to Paddan-aram, where Laban lived and where a preferred bride might await him (Gen. 28. 5-7).

Esau sought to satisfy his parents by a cross-cousin marriage with his father's half-brother's daughter (Gen. 28. 8-9). Such a marriage was permitted but was not a preferential marriage in a patrilineal society. Such marital rules had as their function the need to preserve, maintain or continue an existing kinship structure which might be endangered if those too closely related were allowed to marry one another. It was on this account that incest has been universally condemned as creating havoc in the family, although the evidence has still to be collected for a scientific judgment<sup>10</sup>). Nevertheless, it is probable that among the Hebrews, there was a dislike of incest from an early period as evidenced from the story of Lot's connection with his daughters (Gen. 19. 30-38). At a later date, rules were established to clarify the issue (Lev. 18. 6-18).

Jacob's stay with his uncle enabled him to combine business with pleasure. It was needful for him to find an acceptable bride, particularly in the light of the blessing of Abraham, which was to become his and "to his seed after him" (Gen. 28. 4). Jacob's meeting with Rachel at the well is idyllic in its setting, even though Jacob kissed Rachel before he had introduced himself — a practice of which Calvin disapproved<sup>11</sup>). As a kinsman in the household, Jacob had a privileged place but his desire for Rachel could not be without some compensatory

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8) J. Lazard, *Institutions of Primitive Society*, pp. 57 ff.

9) F. L. K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestor's Shadow*, (1949), p. 82.

10) J. R. Fox, "Sibling Incest", *British Journal of Sociology*, XIII, 2. (June 1952), pp. 128-150.

11) G. von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 284 (note).

service, in lieu of dowry, to obtain her as a bride. Therefore, Jacob works for Laban for a statutory period to secure his bride. Laban deceives Jacob by giving Leah as a bride to Jacob instead. Jacob stays on in the home to work to gain Rachel as well.

Thus, Jacob marries the two sisters, a type of marriage which is known as 'sororal polygyny', which is a very widespread institution. "Among the Australian aborigines this is held to be the ideal form of marriage" <sup>12</sup>). This did not preclude Jacob from a romantic preference for Rachel (ch. 29. 30), because the seven years for Rachel "seemed unto him but a few days because of the love that he had for her" (verse 20). When Rachel did not conceive children, she gave her servant (Bilhah) to Jacob so that she might have children by her servant. Leah acted similarly in giving her servant (Zilpah) to Jacob, to provide Jacob and her mistress with further children. This practice has been noted above as common from the Nuzi Texts.

Other aspects of the relationship between Jacob and Laban also need to receive consideration. In the Nuzi texts, there is evidence of a legal device whereby a man might adopt his daughter's husband who thereby became the man's heir. Thus a man named Nashwi adopted Wullu, the son of Puhi-shenni. If Nashwi had no son of his own, then Wullu was to take the gods (teraphim) of Nashwi. Nashwi gave his daughter Nuhuya in marriage to Wullu but on the condition that if Wullu takes another wife, he shall forfeit the lands and building of Nashwi <sup>13</sup>). Such a method of sale-adoption may well have taken place in the case of Jacob. There is no mention at first that Laban had any sons. When Jacob's marriage with the daughters of Laban takes place, he might have been deemed to be the heir. But Laban has sons, then Jacob is displaced and is no longer the heir, as his wives point out: "Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house? Are we not regarded by him as foreigners?" (Gen. 31. 14). Therefore Jacob made plans to leave the household of Laban and managed to outwit Laban, by leaving stealthily. But Laban still regarded all Jacob's goods, wives and children as his own. "The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks and all that you see is mine", says Laban to Jacob, when he has caught up with him. But a most important factor

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<sup>12</sup>) *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup>) J. B. Pritchard, ANET, pp. 219-220.

appears to be the possession of the household gods, which marked the person as the legitimate heir as in the case of Wullu above. Laban is then very anxious to recover the household gods (Gen. 31. 30-35), which Rachel is equally desirous to keep for her husband (Gen. 31. 19 and 34). When Jacob and Laban agree to part company, it is noteworthy that in their agreement Laban binds Jacob (Gen. 31. 50) to marry no other wives, just as Wullu is bound in the Nuzi text above.

Jacob then travels on with his flocks and herds to the lands, where his father and grandfather had roamed. Evidence from the Mari texts shows that there was freedom of movement possible over all parts of the Fertile Crescent. The Execration Texts of the Egyptian Middle Kingdom (20th-18th centuries) indicate that the land of Palestine, which was held but loosely (if at all) at that time by Egypt, was receiving a new population which accords well with the arrival of such pastoral nomads. In particular, the patriarchs are depicted as roving in the central mountain area of Palestine from the area of Shechem south to the Negeb, in the Negeb and east of the Jordan. They do not appear to have roamed in northern Palestine, the Jordan Valley, the Plain of Esdraelon nor (apart from the far north) in the coastal plain. It is evident that the towns mentioned, such as Shechem, Dothan, Bethel and even Jerusalem, were in existence in the Middle Bronze Age, so that some contact with such places was at least possible. The picture is one of tribal chieftains, who have not yet settled down as feudal lords. This fits well into the period between the twentieth and sixteenth centuries B.C. The shepherd clans appear to move about in a land of peace and conduct their affairs without undue outside interruption. Their period of wandering long remained as a racial memory, as we find it as a cultic confession even at a much later date: "A wandering Aramean was my father" (Deut. 26. 5).

The importance of this tradition of pastoral families cannot be over-estimated in the life of later Israel, in which the clan (*mishpāhā*) is the connecting link between the tribe and the household or father's house (Num. 2. 34). The nucleus of the clan-family (*mishpāhā*) is *beth obh*, the father's house. The latter is connected with the term *bayith*, which is a common Semitic word, denoting the dwelling, house or tent but also all of those who live in and around the building, i.e. the household. The tribe and the city both had a place of importance but the household preserved its place as the centre of life, as there

kinship in the most intimate sense was found. The life of the Israelites always retained the family stamp upon it. Other factors of a political and social nature had their influence upon the home but the later laws retained the kinship-connection even when Israel had become a great nation.

The unity within the household was re-inforced by religious ties. A number of terms indicate a close personal tie between the father of the family or clan and his God. These are: the God of Abraham (Gen. 28. 13; 31, 42, 53); the Kinsman of Isaac (*pahad yishaq*: Gen. 31. 42, 53)<sup>14</sup> and the Champion (Mighty One) of Jacob (Gen. 49. 24). Each has his God as the patron deity of the clan, so that whilst Jacob swears by the Kinsman of Isaac (Gen. 31. 42) in making his covenant with Laban, the latter swears by the God of Nahor, his father (verse 53). It is probable that the cult of the ancestral deity was a simple one, though the cult was not without images, as the teraphim of Laban indicate. Whatever place the worship of the moon-God Sin had in earlier Semitic worship in Ur and Haran, it appears clear that the great official polytheisms of Mesopotamia have no place in the patriarchal record. Similarly, there is no trace of the orgies of the fertility cults of Canaan. Even human sacrifice is ruled out of the cult of the patriarchs. The clan-father (or house-father) performed the rites, which included the blood sacrifices of animals. The various clan cults were no doubt subsumed under that of Yahweh when the clans became united "into the blood stream of Israel".

Important factors in this simple cult-relationship were the personal bond between the God and the clan, which was upheld by divine promise, and the contractual arrangements between the worshipper and his God. The promise was of land and progeny if the clan was faithful, as seen in Genesis chapter 15. The relationship was deemed to be a covenant (contract) which depended on the worshipper's trust (Gen. 15. 6).

This early contractual element came to have greater importance later, especially in the Sinaitic covenant, attributed to Moses. The early covenant with the patriarchs seems to be of much simpler mould but had larger potentialities for future relationships, which caused A. Alt

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<sup>14</sup>) W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1957), p. 248. He suggests 'kinsman' in place of the older rendering 'Fear of Isaac' which is found in all English versions.

to style the god(s) of the patriarchs as *paidagogoi* (tutors) to Yahweh, the God of Israel <sup>15</sup>).

Nevertheless, this early nomadic and pastoral tradition had important consequences also on the ethical side of later Israel's life. Leadership depended on the personal sagacity and courage of great individual personalities, not upon the superior authority of certain hereditary individuals or an aristocracy. The common interests of the community served to limit the powers of the nomad, who bowed to this authority but no other. Moreover, it was possible to move on from the overbearing influence of an undesirable neighbour. Therefore, freedom of the person and a sense of equality marked the relationship between shepherd clans. Both these factors had their repercussions in the conflicts between prophets and kings in later times.

Furthermore, the nomad's life is a hard one. "By day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes", says Jacob to Laban (Gen. 31. 40). The constant danger from the elements, and from human and animal perils made constant vigilance imperative. There was no place for an enervating luxury, which the townsman could enjoy. Therefore, the nomad has normally a high standard in his moral code, especially in sexual matters. Thus, among the Masai as herdsmen there is an ethical standard considerably higher than among their agricultural neighbours in Africa.

The existence of a pastoral clan depends upon the loyalty of its members to one another and upon regulations against murder. The loyalty of its members is expressed in the laws regulating marriage, which are designed to keep the blood pure. Therefore the fear of incest and the agreement about preferential marriages served to knit the clan together and avoid conflict from contrary instincts. The belief in the power of "the blood" is such that it is deemed to have a personality of its own and in any case was too sacred to be touched (Lev. 17. 14).

The group must also ensure that its members have security against unlimited blood-feud and murder. In the case of Abel, Cain is told: "The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground" (Gen. 4. 10). The cry for vengeance is an ancient one. The call to requite the honour of the group may take the form to 'go one better', which Lamech appears to have done. "I have slain a man to my

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15) A. Alt, *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, I, p. 63.

wounding and a young man to my hurt" (Gen. 4. 23). Blood unrevenged was deemed to bring disaster on the community, so more stringent laws were needed to be laid down to prevent unhindered bloodshed by conflicting groups.

As relationships between the sexes needed regulation, so too did the relationships between the age-groups. Respect for tradition and for the authority and experience of the elders of the clan is set forth in the fifth commandment: "Honour thy father and thy mother", which undoubtedly dates from a very early period. Jeremiah looked back to the early days of Israel's history with wistfulness (Jer. 2. 2, 3), as days when Israel was closest to the Lord's intention. There is ample reason to believe that the ethical standard of the pastoral period was a high one and this came to have a peculiar and particular importance for later Israelite history, because the tradition and outlook of the primitive days remained strong in at least some part of the community. This does not appear to have been so among other ancient peoples and so provides a pointer towards the fusion of faith and morality, which was an inheritance which Israel was to give to the world.



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## CAN MONOTHEISM BE TAUGHT?

(Further considerations on the typology of Monotheism)

BY

ALESSANDRO BAUSANI

Our Western culture seems scarcely responsive, at its present stage, to the charms of "Monotheism". According to my definition of Monotheism, whose typology I have already discussed elsewhere<sup>1)</sup> the monotheistic view sees its opponent in the archaic culture, in the sense Mircea Eliade has given to this term<sup>2)</sup>. But now in Europe it is exactly the archaic world that seems to attract the attention and interest of the élites. As a contemporary Italian journalist puts it: "...the taste for the Archaic can be considered one of the characteristics of our century. For us *folk-* (in folkways, folklore etc.) means all that is simple, pure or genuine... Our interest in folkways or folklore becomes nothing less than the desire of going back to something we consider as authentic; it is a way to oppose the technicism of our modern world. As Tristan Tzara wrote: We are now in front of a revaluation of all those arts that used to be considered as barbaric, of those arts that were not formerly appreciated simply because their development did not follow the same lines of the historic development of arts in the so called civilized nations".<sup>3)</sup> Monotheism is, culturally considered, exactly the enemy of this kind of archaic culture. Here are a few "axioms" — already discussed by me in full in the above mentioned article and elsewhere — which I consider important as starting point for the discussion that will follow.

a. Monotheism, in the restricted and precisest sense of the word, was born only once in history, in West Asia.<sup>4)</sup>

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1) A. BAUSANI, *Note per una tipologia del monoteismo*, in SMSR, vol. XXVIII, 1, 1957, pp. 67-88.

2) For instance in *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour*, Paris, 1949. The idea of "archaic culture" is almost (but not completely) identical with that, of sociological origin, of "closed community".

3) A. ROSSI, *Gusto per il "popolare", oggi*, in *Un secolo di canzoni*, Roma 1961.

4) I agree in general with R. PERTAZZONI's definition of "monotheism" (See: *Dio, Formazione e sviluppo del monoteismo*. Bologna 1922; *Saggi di storia delle*

b. Monotheism was born as a conscious revolution against the archaic (so better than polytheistic) culture, a revolution led by the strong personality of a struggling and often suffering Prophet.

c. The central point of this revolution is not prevalently theoretic but rather dynamic. It consists chiefly in the concentration of the Numinosum — which in archaic cultures we see, as it were, spread in and around Nature — into a single dynamic point called God. Though the ancient founders of Monotheism never use the late and bookish concept of personality, the personality of God, which generally has a personal name (Yahweh, Allāh etc.), is a primary component of every real Monotheism. Summarizing, the Numinosum is concentrated in a single transcendent personal God.

d. In the various historical monotheisms (all more or less influenced by the original Jewish monotheism) I tried to distinguish between a primary and a secondary monotheistic type, the primary being exemplified by Hebraism and Islam (both born in a pre-monotheistic milieu), the secondary by Christianity and Bahaism (both germinated in an already monotheistic soil)<sup>5</sup>).

e. As the chief characteristic of secondary monotheisms I individuated what I called (rather paradoxically perhaps) fermentation of the One God. A primary monotheism shows a psycho-religious development of this kind:

The god of our tribe, called X, is more powerful  
He wins all the other gods, as we can practically demonstrate to you (holy war)  
Your gods are so weak that one may say practically that they are not  
(beginnings of an elementary theology)

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*religioni e mitologia*, Roma 1946; *Onniscienza di Dio*, Torino 1955 etc.). His idea of a unique origin of historical monotheism brought him perhaps too far, when he supposed (*La religione di Zaratustra*, Bologna 1920, p. 79 ff.) that even Zaratustra might have been influenced by prophetic Jewish ideas. His interpretation of the well-known "changing of meaning" of *deva* (God) into *daēva* (devil) as a conscious rebellion of Zaratustra against polytheism, led him to consider Zoroastrianism as a real monotheism, whereas this could be put in doubt, if one considers other typological features of Zaratustra's religion, which, in my typological essay mentioned under note 1, I have called "failed monotheism".

5) Bahaism is generally discussed, in all handbooks of comparative religion, under the heading of "Muslim Sects". Typologically this is a mistake. It is as if one would discuss Christianity under the chapter "Jewish sects", as I tried to demonstrate in *Tipologia* and in my essay *Religione islamica* in "Le Civiltà dell'Oriente". (vol. III, Rome 1958, pp. 291-412, see especially pp. 407 ff.).

Your gods are so weak that one may say practically that they are bad (beginnings of an elementary ethic of power)

Our God is so powerful that He can afford the protection of all (beginnings of the universalistic idea)

Our God is so powerful that He can show mercy on all, once they are subdued to His will (beginnings of the idea of God-Father, particularly developed in secondary monotheisms)

The ethics of primary monotheisms is an ethic of power and will.

The root of the universalism of primary monotheisms is: if God were not the God of all, he would not be omnipotent, his power would be impaired.

The psycho-religious stages of development of a secondary monotheism are remarkably different (and rather nuanced):

The merciful God of All speaks to Man through the Prophet, as you say, and He will save the world.

But the world—as we see—is not yet saved. A Prophet-Saviour is to come, you admit. Now He came. (Eschatological tension)

He is holy. But God also is holy. The Numinosum is, in a way, proliferating. New myths are born, but they are basically different from the premonotheistic (archaic) myths. The “fermentation” and spreading of the Numinosum from above (from the personal God) is something radically different, also, from premonotheistic archaic pantheism<sup>6)</sup>

God reveals truths about himself (a gnosis type of religion superposes itself, in different degrees of intensity, on the will and power religion) and saves through sacral institutions (possibility of developments of the idea of sacraments and sacral events and things)

The new Prophet has been killed by the unfaithful people of God. Blood, martyrdom and suffering assume a new and sacral value

The idea of a charismatic Church substitutes (or mixes with) the idea of

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6) Neglecting of this typological difference brought some modern philosophers to mistake Christianity for a tendentially immanentistic religiosity (“because God is incarnated and humanized in Christ” etc.). Even a great modern philosopher like B. Croce (*Perché non possiamo non dirci cristiani*), was attracted into this misinterpretation. In reality the Christian doctrine that Christ and only Christ is the incarnation of God is the greatest hindrance to a philosophico-pantheistic generalization of the Man-God contact, and the possibilities of pantheism are perhaps greater in an absolutely monolithic monotheism like Islam and Hebraism than in (true, historical) Christianity. (I tried to discuss this question in my article *Aspetti del misticismo islamico* in “Ricerche Religiose” vol. XX, 1949, pp. 1-19). An acute explanation of the seemingly paradoxical fact that some “secondary monotheists” considered themselves as more “monotheistic”, more “unitarian” than the primary monotheists may be found at p. 13 of M. G. S. HODGSON’s article on the Druze religion (*Al-Darazî and Ḥamza in the Origin of Druze religion*, in JAOS, 82, 1, 1962).

the people of God (Christian Church, the Baha'i idea of the *safīna-i ḥamrā'*, initiatic communities of Druzes and Ismā'īlis etc.)<sup>7)</sup>

After this rather long, but necessary, preamble (for details one may read the already mentioned article *Note per una tipologia del monoteismo*) we can now return to a fundamental point: that of the contrast monotheism versus archaic culture. And we enter *in medias res* by showing a highly interesting example of "teaching monotheism" to people belonging to an archaic culture, a sermon of Father Fernando de Avendaño of Lima, to the "Incas"<sup>8)</sup> of the first half of the XVII century. The subject of the Sermon, the ninth one of the thirty two *Sermones* published in Lima in 1649 in a beautiful, simple and idiomatic Quichua language<sup>9)</sup>, is the problem of the beginning of things (*paccarina*), particularly important in a pre-monotheistic culture (the "myths of the origins") which the pious Jesuit father destroys in a language that reminds one of that of a XVIII century illuminist. Summing up the various points of the sermon in a more organic way, what Father Avendaño says to his "sons" (*churicuna*) is this:

a. «Your wise men (*amautta*) of old and your "historians" (*quipu-camayucc*)<sup>10)</sup> did not possess books». The idea of a holy book is basic in all monotheisms, primary as well as secondary. The people who do not possess books are barbarous (archaic pre-monotheists)<sup>11)</sup>.

7) These typological affinities do not mean, obviously, identification. There subsist between the "Church" idea of Christianity and the "community" idea of Baháism remarkable differences due to the different historical circumstances of their birth. Typology can only help, not substitute history.

8) This term indicated originally only the ruling class, but in the sermons, as in many Spanish books, it serves to designate the entire people of the Inca Empire too.

9) In fact these Sermons are considered by linguists one of the best examples of Quichua style and are quite different from some translations of R.C. catechisms (e.g. the remarkable *Cathechismus Quichuensis* by Jurado Palomino edited by I. Galante, Madrid, 1943) in which Latin style is forced into Quichua, an exercise more interesting for the Spanish "purist" authors than for the Quichua readers (or hearers). Not possessing any modern edition of the Sermons I translate directly from the Quichua text given in Appendix to: J. J. VON TSCHUDI, *Organismus der Khetšua-Sprache*, Leipzig 1884, pp. 487-504.

10) Literally "specialists in *quipu* counting". The *quipu* (knotted cord) is the well known mnemonic aid and recording device of the ancient Peruvians.

11) On the other hand many an archaic civilization showed a clear contempt for writing as something satanic (an ancient Iranian example is mentioned in my *Persia Religiosa*, Milan 1958, p. 20-21).

b. You (Incas) say that the God of the Spaniards is not the same as your God. Your cultural "racism" is a mistake. There is only one God of all. Monotheism destroys at the root the archaic ideas of racial Gods.

c. God did not create your ancestors here in Peru. The dismantling of the complex machine of archaic culture goes further: the roots of racial and national pride are cut. "True science" (which your ancestors did not have, not possessing books) shows that God created man in the old continent.

d. And He created all men from a single couple. Here the anti-racism of Father Avendaño reaches its climax. He says to his Indian flock: Why do you say that you Incas were created in a way different from that of the ordinary men? Look at me, sons! "Have I got bones different from yours? Is not my flesh the same as yours? And my eyes, my hands, my feet are they different from yours? No! All of us, men, are made of the same flesh and same bones. Therefore we all men were born and originated from our first parents, Adam and Eva: those alone are our *pacarina* (ancestors, first origin)" <sup>12</sup>). He even goes so far — though practically a representative of the colonial power — as to say to his "subjects": "if one of you says the contrary, i.e. if you maintain that Spaniards and Incas are of different origin you will fall into hersy (*herejia*) and the Lords Inquisitors will burn such a man as a heretic (*hereje*) and traitor (*aucca*)!"

e. Your myths of the origins are proven false also by their intrinsic silliness. Don't you see how ridiculous is the story, told by your ancestors, according to which after the Deluge (*llocllapachacuti*) <sup>13</sup>) three eggs fell from heaven? From the first — you say — a golden egg, your *curacas* (nobles) were originated, from the second (a silver one) your *ñustas* (noble ladies), from the third (a copper egg) the vulgar men. "Were the *curacas* chicken — adds Father Avendaño with a voltairian irony — that they had to be born from an egg?" And again your old men tell that after the Deluge a thunderbolt fell on

<sup>12</sup>) The verb-root *pacca-* means "to rise", "spring", "get up". The Spanish missionaries made wide use of the hispanized word "las pacarinas" sacred objects connected with the mythical origins, often "adored" by natives. (Cfr. Anello OLIVA s.j. *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en el Peru*, t. I, Lima 1895, libro I, cap. IV.)

<sup>13</sup>) A Deluge, was admitted by pre-Christian Inca mythology. The term means "universal turning point" (*pacha-cuti*) [worked by] rain (*lloclla*).

mount Raccu and from that thunderbolt men were born. Aren't you ashamed of being sons of a thunder? How can thunderbolt generate man? Similar begets its own similar: horses generate horses, dogs dogs, the lightning kills men, does not generate them!" etc. An elementary rationalism versus the mythological logic of the archaic legends is one of the basic elements of Monotheistic teaching. We find it also in the Muslim arguments against silly fables, beginning from the Qur'ān itself, where the existence of various gods or goddesses is ridiculized as illogical <sup>14</sup>).

f. These myths, once destroyed, are — it would seem at a first and superficial glance — replaced by new ones. Father Avendaño, discussing the idea "of the ancients" that Manco Capac was transformed into a stone, ridiculizes it, only to say, one line further, that the only true (historical) instance of a human being transformed into a mineral is that of Loth's wife! And, concerning the origin of languages, the story of the Tower of Babel is related. The chief difference, however, between these "monotheistic myths" (existing in other monotheistic religions too) <sup>15</sup>) and those of archaic cultures lies in the fact that the new myths are not felt as such (as primordial archetypes reproduced in rite and vividly lived by the community) but as chronological history. So rationally historical are they considered, that Father Avendaño, answering the question of one of his Indian sons regarding the origin of differently coloured races, maintains a typically rationalist explanation of how the first Negro, Chus, son of Cham, was born: he says that the mother of Chus was intensely thinking of something black, identifying the blackness of Chus as a kind of the well-known psychosomatic phenomenon of birth-marks. This sermon of Father Avendaño is particularly interesting just for this characteristic substitution of myths in monotheistic teaching. The Tower of Babel story and the Adam-Eve story were themselves, at their origin, myths of an archaic type, typologically identical with the *paccarina* myths of the Incas, but, inserted into a mo-

14) Cfr. Qur'ān XVI, 57-59; XXXVII, 149; etc.

15) The Qur'ān itself contains half-mythical or legendary materials (e.g. almost the whole of the XVIII *sūra*) used, however, either as history or as an ethical warning. In the "failed monotheism" of Zoroastrianism, myths seem to occupy typologically an intermediate position between that of myths in pure monotheisms and that of archaic myths (See, for a discussion of this point, my *Persia Religiosa*, already mentioned, at the pp. 73-76).



notheistic system, they function differently, the are "modern", palaeo-historical <sup>16)</sup> explanation of facts <sup>17)</sup>).

g. This is why any connection between myth and ritual must also be broken in the soul of the sons of Father Avendaño: You must not adore the *mallqui*, nor the *huacca* <sup>18)</sup>). Only God is holy and only Adam and Eve are our common historical progenitors. Christian sacraments, in spite of their historical connections with pagan rites, are typologically quite different, they function in quite a different system. Even the monotheistic miracles are felt so different from the pagan ones that the pious writer uses the new Spanish word *milagro* to express his concept, as he uses *Dios* for God <sup>19)</sup>). In spite of all psychological similarities it is obvious that the miracles of a monotheistic religion (wrought by a personal God generally for ethical and practical purposes) are typologically different from the pre-monotheistic miracles of a natural automatic-magical character, often deprived of any ethical reasons. This is why Father Avendaño teaches his sons the "superiority" of the miracle of the tower of Babel and Loth's wife and insists on their difference from the miracles of their Inca ancestors.

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16) In monotheistic cultures one finds often phenomena similar, *in nuce*, to modern "liberalism", "democracy", "sense of history" etc. which however would be impossible to define as liberalism, democracy, historicism *tout court* (as certain modern apologetes of Islam and other monotheistic cultures are always ready to do): for these I use the more prudent terms "palaeo-democracy", „palaeo-liberalism" etc.

17) Rather different are the neo-myths of certain secondary monotheisms (for instance the death of Christ versus the archaic dying God). In spite of the greater similarity of neo-myths of this kind with the archaic ones, a chief difference subsists: they are also historical facts, nay they lose any significance if not admitted as history too.

A further interesting example of the difference between archaic myth and monotheistic neo-myth: in many archaic cultures water is in itself holy, contains a strong numinous energy. In Shī'ca Islām water is, again, in a sense, sacred, but because it is "the dowry of Fāṭima" (a historic personality), as salt is "the dowry of Eve" (See F. TAESCHNER, *Der anatolische Dichter Nāṣirī und sein Futurvetname*. Leipzig 1944, p. 26: all the waters of the world have been given to Fāṭima as her dowry etc.)

18) The *mallqui* is the primordial originator of various clans, a "sacral object". *Huacca* is a more general word for everything "holy", and adorable.

19) Only later texts make an attempt to a "cultural identification" (evidently considered as dangerous by the first missionaries) translating the Spanish *Dios* with the Quichua term *Pachacamac* (World-Creator) (for instance J. D. ANCHORENA in his *Gramatica Quechua*, Lima 1874).

h. Such a clearly felt and clearly stated sense of the differences brings the monotheistic preacher to say boldly: this is truth and that is error. Take this and leave that, otherwise you will be damned. Apart from the differences of teaching methods between primary and secondary monotheisms (see further) this clearness (in the words of modern thought intolerance) is common to all monotheistic types. Father Avendaño's sermon ends with these very significant words: "Now tell me, sons, before the Spaniards came to preach and warn you in this country, how many of the human beings born here were saved? How many went to heaven? Not even one! And how many Incas went to hell? All. And how many queens? The entire number of them! And how many noble ladies? One and all!". To be saved one must hear this preaching and know the truth of monotheism. Each one personally. Here we are in presence, however, of one of the characteristics of teaching in a secondary monotheism.

The method of teaching used in a primary monotheism is better exemplified by Islam. The Truth (*ḥaqq*) of Islam is not, or not chiefly, a theoretical truth, but also and prevalently, law and customs felt as given by God, and obviously cannot be spread through personal persuasion, but only through the physical conquest of the region to be converted. This point (that most Muslim modernists, under the influence of European Christian theory, try to ignore or the "interpret")<sup>20</sup> is the one that attracted the strongest accusations of intolerance against Islam. It is possible to understand it only if we bear clearly in mind that the Truth is not, for Islam, a theology, is not a knowledge that bring salvation to the single, but a true attitude or behaviour of an entire society (including therefore, amongst its essentials, canon law, customs and habits, even the behaviour to be followed in a toilet). This cannot be taught personally, but only,

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20) The general attitude amongst Muslim modernists is that the first "holy wars" were purely "defensive". In such discussions generally the Muslim modernists commit the mistake of unconsciously accepting the point of view of their adversaries on a given subject, showing afterwards that the historical facts are not what their adversaries think they have been, unaware that by such method they practically become converts to a Christian typology. The impasse reached by Muslim modernism was well shown in the recent (1957-1958) International Islamic Colloquium of Lahore (Pakistan) (A. BAUSANI, *Il "Convegno Internazionale Islamico" di Lahore* in SMSR, 1958, vol. XXIX, 2, pp. 283-304)

more or less violently, imposed. Apart from historical explanations<sup>21)</sup> the well known qur'ānic expression *lā ikrāha fi'd-dīn* (there is no compulsion in religion) so often quoted by Muslim modernists and which sounds strangely contradictory to some Christian critics of Islam, forgetful of their own intolerance only practised in a different direction, finds its logical place only if interpreted as a recommendation regarding violent or annoying personal proselitism. Far from being a symptom of leniency and of quakerism *ante litteram* it simply means: don't bother other people trying to convert them personally or force them to follow your religious habits.<sup>22)</sup> And this recommendation was always followed by Muslims up to the present time: it is very rare even now that a Muslim try to convert a non Muslim friend by personal preaching or insisting: exceptions are sometimes found just in that zone of Islam (the *shī'a* milieu) that inclines

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21) It is generally admitted that the older *sūras* of the Qur'ān show a more irenic attitude, whereas in the last part of Muḥammad's career the necessities of a growing and organized community brought him to a more rigid position in front of the non Muslims. (See the notes to my translation of the Qur'ān: *Il Corano*, Florence 1955, especially note to IX, 29, p. 559).

22) This restrictive interpretation resorts quite clearly from the classical *tafsīrs* (commentaries of the Qur'ān). Ṭabarī (*Tafsīr*, Cairo ed. of 1321 H. in 30 voll., III vol. pp. 9-13) seems to limit the application of that verse to the *ahl al-kitāb* (Jews, Christian, Zoroastrian and Sabaeans, possessing monotheistic holy books) and connects its revelation with "personal" episodes; if intended in a more general way it should, according to the opinion of various personalities mentioned in the *tafsīr*, be considered as abrogated (*mansūkh*) by other ordinances, especially of sura IX (v. 29 etc.). The almost unanimous opinion of modernistic commentaries (orthodox or not) is that that verse is the magna charta of religious toleration. Maulānā Abū 'l-Kalām Azād (*Tarjumān al-Qur'ān* in urdu, Lahore ed. 1931 vol. I p. 295) says that this verse shows that the only proper way to spread religion is by preaching (*da'wat*) and that war is only admitted in extreme cases of defence, not in order to propagate religion. A. Yusuf Ali (*The Holy Quran*, Lahore, 1938, I vol., p. 103) writes that "compulsion is incompatible with religion because religion depends upon faith and will and these would be meaningless if induced by force...". The Ahmadiyya (considered "heretic" by the orthodox) translation and commentary under the auspices of Mirzā Bashīr-ud-dīn Maḥmūd, present head of the Ahmadiyya Movement (Lahore I vol. 1947, p. 325) state that "the object for which Muslims have been commanded to take up arms against the disbelievers is not to force them to accept Islam, but only to check mischief and put a stop to persecution. The verse enjoins Muslims in the clearest and strongest of words not to resort to force for converting non-Muslims to Islam". On the important subject of modernistic commentaries of the Qur'ān see now J. M. S. BALJON, *Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation* (1880-1960), Leiden 1960.

more to a religious type of "secondary monotheistic" character.<sup>23)</sup> The missionary impulse came only in recent times and is practiced on large scale only by "heretic" communities<sup>24)</sup>. Even a broadminded and intelligent Muslim modernist of our times, Muḥammad Iqbāl (d. 1938, Muslim India/Pakistan) very clearly expressed his aversion to Muslim missionaries (*muballigh*)<sup>25)</sup> in Europe in a poem written around 1923, in Persian (*Ba-muballigh-i Islām dar Firangistān*, To the missionary of Islam in Europe) in which he says that it would be preferable to concentrate the energies uselessly spent in trying to convert people incapable to feel the sting of true religious passion (*ʿiṣq*) for the purpose of galvanizing the social power and the enthusiasm of the Muslim community, so that this Community may become again (though this is not clearly said) the true ruler of the world<sup>26)</sup>.

It is not without significance that a certain tendency to use "secondary monotheistic" teaching methods is to be found just in those "heresies" of sunnī Islam, which introduce into the monolithic monotheism of the Sunna a first seed of that "fermentation" of the Only God, considered by me as a characteristic sign of secondary monotheisms. The interesting Ismāʿīlī treatise entitled *Kitābu 'l-ʿālim wa 'l-ghulām*

23) Every one acquainted personally with Muslims knows that the case of *shīʿas* who apply the canonic injunction of *al-amr bi 'l-maʿrūf wa 'n-nahy ʿan al-munkar* (inviting to goodness and forbidding bad actions) in a wider sense implying a moderate proselitism is not infrequent. An interesting example has been shown by me in my article *Un manoscritto persiano inedito sulla ambasceria di Ḥusein Ḥān Moqaddam...* in "Oriente Moderno", XXXIII (1953), p. 504.

24) Especially notable are the missionary efforts of the Ahmadiyya movement, that gained proselites also in Africa, Europe and America, though recently even orthodox Muslims seem to have initiated "missionary" campaigns (see F. M. PAREJA, *Islamologia* Rome 1951 pp. 484, 589). The famous book by T. W. ARNOLD, *The Preaching of Islam* (Westminster, 1896) is a well documented attempt to prove the contrary, viz. that Islam was propagated chiefly by preaching, an idea which, though embodying doubtless a part of truth (preaching was often used, but after political conquest) is not generally accepted.

25) The word itself, meaning one who brings a message (*balāgh*), does not correspond exactly with our "teacher", but rather suggests the image of one who brings a message of Truth without too much insisting in "teaching" its details (Cfr. the well known Persian saying: *bar rasūlān balāgh bāshad va bas*, "the Apostle has no other task than that of communicating the message").

26) Text of the poem in *Payām-i Mashriq* (The message of the East), Lahore edition 1948, p. 159. French translation in *Le Message de l'Orient* (by E. MEYEROVITCH and M. ACHENA, Paris, 1956), p. 129.

(The Wise Man and the Disciple) studied by Ivanow<sup>27</sup>) and considered by him as written about the IX century, is rather important in this connection, as it contains a first hand description of the Ismaili teaching technique. In Fars, — so the unknown author of the booklet tells us — there was a man who, among the general Ignorance, reached true Knowledge (in other words he became an Ismaili). As one of his first duties is teaching, he begins to travel and to teach<sup>28</sup>). One day he enters a far away town and, unobserved, sees a group of people discussing religion. He comes nearer showing great interest. They invite him to join the discussion, and there he throws the first seeds of the Ismaili truth. His words impress those men, who, however, afterwards disperse and forget them. Only a youth remains with the *dā'ī* (missionary, term derived from *da'wa*, mentioned above), eager to know more. The message, as we clearly see, is communicated personally to those prepared to receive it, similarly to what happened in first Christian preaching and in the Bābī-Bahā'ī *tabligh* (translated not too exactly by the English “teaching”) <sup>29</sup>). After various stages, the teacher reveals the name of the *Imām* to the disciple. “God is manifested<sup>30</sup>) in So and So” is the gist of all teaching in secondary monotheisms. The name acquires great importance in them: let one think of “the greatest Name” (*ism-i a'zam*) of Bahā'ism (identified with the name *Bahā'*), the name Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς in Christianity (Ἰησοῦς ὁ κύριος is considered by leading modern scholars as the “essence” of primitive Christian message), and let one consider, by contrast, the rather unspecific and general meaning of *Islām* (sincere

27) V. IVANOW, *Studies in Early Persian Ismailism*, Bombay-Leiden, 1948, pp. 101 ff.

28) The technical term for Ismaili religious teaching is *da'wa*, properly “invitation”, calling to Truth. Even in this case, as in *tabligh*, the term does not translate our “teaching”, exactly *ta'lim*, which is however in Ismailism rather the authoritative infallible teaching of the *Imām* to those who have already accepted the *da'wa* and are his adepts.

29) English is practically the most widely used language for the Bahā'ī teaching, and the authoritative translations from Arabic and Persian Bahā'ī texts by Shoghi Effendi (d. 1957), the first “Guardian of the Bahā'ī Faith” (*walī-i amr*) are into English (see my articles *Bāb*, *Bābis*, *Bahā'u'llāh* and *Bahā'is* in the new edition of the “Encyclopaedia of Islam” and the last chapter of my *Persia Religiosa*, already mentioned).

30) The forms of this manifestation may, of course, vary: from *maḡhar* (literally “place in which the light of God is visible”, manifest) in Bahā'ism to “incarnation” in Christianity, two rather different concepts.

surrender to God's will), and the practical non existence of a specific name to designate Hebraism as religion.

Here a parenthesis should be open on the remarkable and typologically significant example of the development of teaching techniques in Sikhism, a religion the position of which amongst monotheistic religions is rather difficult to define<sup>31</sup>). Sikhism was born in a way not too dissimilar from Hindu *Bhakti* movements. Almost contemporary with Nānak, the founder of Sikhism (1469-1539), is Kabīr, the Weaver, whose creed is resumed in the *Bhakta-Māl* of Nābhājīdās (XVI c.) as follows<sup>32</sup>):

"Kabīr did not care for castes nor philosophical systems (in our words: neither law [Islam] nor theology [Christianity]), and he considered religious duties, if exercised contrarily to *bhakti* (personal love to God) as irreligion. He showed the various rites as empty and void of religious sense if performed without *bhajan* (sincere personal worship), and the authentic Holy Books of Islam and Hinduism he said not to be a partial Word, but revealed for the utility of All (identity of all religions at the root)."

One is easily led by outward similarities to consider the Hindu-Muslim *bhakti*<sup>33</sup>) as a form of Monotheism. But, typologically, the position of Hindu-Muslim *bhakti* is not in reality that of a monotheism, though it knows, and in a way appreciates, monotheism (and even thinks to be a monotheism). It could be better called para-monotheism. Our typology, sketched in the article mentioned in note 1,

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31) The following, perhaps too long, discussion of Sikhism is justified by the fact that in my preceding article (*Note per una tipologia...* mentioned in note 1) there was only a very short hint at it. The richest collection of materials on Sikh religion (though rather uncritical) still remains the work in six voll. by M. MACAULIFFE, *The Sikh Religion*, Oxford, 1909. This highly interesting para-monotheism still waits for a really scientific comprehensive study. From the Sikh standpoint see now: Gopal Singh. *The Guru Granth Sahib, with essay on Sikh philosophy...* Delhi, 4 vols., 1961-63.

32) I translated from the *braj bhāshā* text contained in the still useful anthology by Garcin de Tassy (*Chrestomathie Hindie et Hindouie*, Paris 1849, p. 63). Further materials on Kabīr in *Dabistān* (op. cit. at note 40) pp. 200ff. See also TRUMPP. *Bemerkungen über den indischen Reformator Kabīr*, in „Atti del IV Congresso Intern. d. Orientalisti" Firenze, vol. II, 1861, pp. 159 ff.

33) A certain distinction should be made between purely Hindu *bhakti* and Hindu-Muslim *bhakti*, though there is the possibility that even some forms of Hindu *bhakti* may have been historically influenced by Islam (Cfr. G. Tucci, *Induismo* in "Le Civiltà dell'Oriente", Rome, 1958, pp. 618 ff.).

can therefore recognize, in addition to Monotheism in the real sense, also para-monotheisms<sup>34</sup>). In fact, if we analyse further the extremely concise, but juicy definition of the *Bhakta-Māl*, we see that the position of Kabīr is based on a condemnation both of the primary and the secondary aspect of (true) monotheism in the name of that psycho-religious attitude of *bhajan* and *bhakti* which is common not only to Hinduism or Islam, but to all religions, being the psychological personal component of all religions: when one abstracts the *bhakti* attitude from a religion whatsoever and appreciates only that, it becomes very easy to say that at the root (a deep, but ultimately human and psychic root) all authentic religious books (and through this “authentic” it is rather easy to select the passages one likes most), though seemingly contradictory, are one, as in all religious books there are elements of a *bhākta* attitude. It is in this connection highly interesting that “the authentic Hindu and Muslim writings” are called in this braj bhasha couplet *sabdī*, *ramainī*, *sākhī*, all technical terms used for emotional songs of *bhākta* mystics, to which the Holy Books are assimilated. Typologically, however, the Bible, the Qur’ān, and even the Vedas, are quite different from a *sabdī* or a *sākhī*! On the contrary the typical monotheistic attitude is not that all religions are identical at the roots (deep psychological roots) but that they must unite under an act of Will, from above; it is God that unifies the world, putting it under the aegis of His single law, or saving it through His singly begotten Son. This misunderstanding of the true typological character of monotheism has been and is rather frequent: under the combined influence of Sufism and Hindu-Muslim *bhakti* even a remarkable personality like Prince Dārā Shikōh (d. 1658) was led to confuse τὸ Θεῶν of Hindu monism with the personal God of Muslim monotheism, in his religious treatise *Majma‘ al-Bahrain*<sup>35</sup>).

34) Thus our typology of monotheism could be constructed on a triple scheme: 1. Monotheisms proper (primary: Judaism and Islam; secondary: Christianity and Bahā’ism) 2. Failed monotheisms (primary: Zoroastrianism; secondary: Manichaeism; archaic: Akhenaton reform) 3. Para-monotheisms (Kabīrpanthīs, Dadhūpanthīs, Sikhs, Akbar’s *dīn-ilāhī* etc.).

35) Edited and translated by Maḥfūẓul Ḥaqq, Calcutta 1929. On Dārā Shikōh see also: Cl. HUART and L. MASSIGNON; *Les entretiens de Lahore*, in „Journal Asiatique” 1926 (209) and MASSIGNON-KASSIM, *Un essai de bloc islamo-hindou au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle* in „Revue du Monde Musulman”, LXIII, 1926. Extreme Sufism,

Teaching, in the religious movements that we have called para-monotheisms, generally takes the aspect of the preaching by a vagabund saint, often accompanied by singing and music. His task is neither to persuade the individuals to accept a salvific doctrine, nor to impose to the society a new divine law, but rather to move the deep psyché to a devotional attitude towards the Deity, a Deity considered for practical purposes as a person having a name. Almost all the bhākta saints emphasize the meditation and the interior repetition of the name of God, enjoying its sweet taste. *Rām Rām* is Kabīr's *dhikr*, for instance, but the names vary according to the different original tendencies of the mystics, and to this purpose any one of the innumerable Hindu incarnations<sup>36</sup>) of God is useful, rendering this religious attitude partially similar to a secondary monotheism: besides the already mentioned differences these para-monotheisms are born in a mixed cultural soil (pre-monotheistic influenced by monotheistic). It can happen that when such an invitation to chant and meditate the name of God creates a community strong enough as to live organically, the new religion may assume some of the aspects of a primary monotheism too (importance of law, sometimes even military character). It is what happened to the Sikh community.

The traditional lives of Nānak (the *janam-sākhīs*) show him in the typical garb of a bhākta Saint: he abandons family life and wanders, together with his faithful minstrel Mardāna, in various provinces of pre-Moghul India. His preaching is very simple. To his parents who insisted that he may renounce his vagrancy he says:

Patience (*khīmā*) is my mother, Contentment (*santōkh*) my father, be the Absolute (*sat*) called my uncle, through which my heart lives... My Lord is the One (*ēkamkār*) who created all creatures...<sup>37</sup>)

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in the few cases in which it really results into pantheism, seems also to assume some characters of para-monotheism, inasmuch as the typically monotheistic problems of the "unity of God" are transferred, in a way that is no more monotheistic, on the plane of the "unity of All".

36) It is astonishing to see how superficially even good scholars in the field of Oriental studies treat such extremely delicate terms as "manifestation", "incarnation" etc. confounding different typologies. It is frequent to read, in treatises of Islamistics, of "*incarnations* of God" in Muslim "sects" that, apart very rare exceptions, never admitted such (for them) blasphemous idea, preferring that (typologically different) of *maṣḥar* (see note 30).

37) I translate from the Panjabi text in gurmukhi characters reproduced in W. St. CLAIR TISDALL, *A simplified Grammar and Reading Book of the Panjabi*



To some Hindu yogis, the Gobind-lok, with whom, according to tradition, he had one of his frequent *gost* (religious discussions) he chants a *sabd*, in which he says:

Without the name of Rām nobody will obtain liberation, the only freed man will be the one who takes the name (*nām lāhē*) from the mouth of the true *Guru* (Master)... Even if a man explains and comments books, lessons and grammars, and accomplishes the meritorious work of the three daily prayers, without the song (*sabd*) of the *Guru* how can he obtain Liberation, o friends? Without the name of *Rām* he will die in confusion! <sup>38</sup>)

At the end of the song the Gobind-lok touched the feet of Nānak repeating *guru, guru!* and said: “*Guru-jī!* We put ourselves under thy protection!” To which the *Guru* answered: “Mention often the name of God (*Srī Parmēsur-jī*) <sup>39</sup>) and the True *Guru* will bless you” (in other occasions: “supplicate *Parmēsur* continuously”) and they became disciples (*sikkh*) of Nānak. This seems the typical conversion proceeding of the first Sikhs. They included, according to tradition, various elements of Indian population, not only Panjabis and Rajputs but even, for instance, Muslim Pathans. According to tradition *Guru Bābā Nānak* travelled in Kābul and there he converted various Muslims: *kaiā musulmānā ate hindūā nū Parmēsur dē nām dā updēs kūtā* (interesting formula often repeated to indicate conversion: “he gave the instruction of God’s name to various Muslims and Hindus”). Other formulas descriptive of conversion: *Parmēsur dā nām bakhaskē apnē jīhā banāiā* (having bestowed on him the name of God he rendered him similar to himself); “they obtained (*prāpt hōiā*) the name of God”; “they were rendered fortunate (*nihāl*) through the instruction of the name of God”; they “obtained to serve (*bhajan*) the *Guru*”; “they were joined to Service, or Worship (*bhajan wāl jōriā*). Sikhism — as we noticed above — shows typical aspects of a secondary monotheism also in the quasi-divinization of his founder

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language, pp. 51-52. The text is included in a simple “Life of *Guru Bābā Nānak*”, written in modern times but reproducing old legends and traditions.

38) Ibid. pp. 60-61. The text is taken from one of the numerous *Janam-sākhīs*, traditional lives of *Guru Bābā Nānak*.

39) Literally “the Supreme Lord”; *Parmēsur* (Sanskrit. *Parameśvara*) is not, strictly speaking, a “personal” name of God, like that of *Rāma*.

as a redeemer. The Author of *Dabistān-i mazāhib* <sup>40)</sup> heard “from trustworthy Sikhs” (*az sikhān-i muṭtabar*), around the year 1645, before the great reform of Guru Gobind Singh, a legend according to which “Nānak reached a crossroad. One road led to Paradise, the other to Hell. Nānak chose the road to Hell and took away the damned souls. The Lord of Glory told him: ‘These sinners cannot enter Paradise. It is therefore necessary that thou goest into the world and save them’. Nānak came into the world and now those former inhabitants of hell are his disciples. The Guru goes and comes repeatedly to and from this world in order that all may be saved”. This is a characteristic Saviour image; but born historically in a quite different way from that of the true secondary monotheisms: here the influence of the Hindu idea of *āvatār* seems preponderant.

Such a salvific bhākta attitude, rather than religion, gradually developed into a military-religious community. The first stage of this transformation is well shown in the long notice of the already quoted *Dabistān* on the Sikhs. “...Their number increased everywhere until, at the time of Guru Arjan Mal (1581-1606) they were many, and there was no town in all the inhabited earth (*ābād būm*) that did not have at least some Sikh... <sup>41)</sup> As the Sikhs consider their Guru as *sačcā pādšāh* (true king) they call their officers *musnad* or *rām-dās* <sup>42)</sup>. In the epoch of the *gurus* preceding the fifth (Arjan

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40) This “School of Religions” or “Encyclopaedia of Religions” written in Persian in India by Muḥsin Fānī in the XVII century, deserves to be studied by Orientalists and students of Comparative Religion more deeply. Unfortunately there are only lithographed editions of it and a very bad old translation into English by D. SHEA and A. TROYER (with the strange title of *School of Manners*, 1843) reprinted with abridgements by A. V. WILLIAM JACKSON in 1901 (New York). The book was originated in some syncretistic Hindu-Parsi-Muslim milieu of the Mughal India of XVII century, still imbued with the spirit that led Emperor Akbar to his famous (and failed) monistic-monotheistic reform (*tauḥīd-i ilāhī*). The *Dabistān* contains often first hand accounts of the different religions and sects with which the Author came into contact, and is a precious source both for the study of Indo-Muslim spirituality of the Mughal time and for a better knowledge of many half-ignored religious sects and movements. A new scientific translation of this treatise would be of primary importance.

41) It is not clear what is meant by *ābād būm*, (the inhabited earth). Probably only the regions of India, as Sikhism never was spread outside.

42) *Musnad* is the Arabo-Persian term indicating an officer of the Muslim administration of India, then passed, with a corruption in pronunciation, to mean Sikh dignitaries. *Rām-dās* is a Hindu term meaning “slave of God (Rāma)”.

Mal himself) it was not customary that the Sikhs pay a tribute (*bhēṭ*) but the votive contributions (*nuzūr*) were self-imposed. Arjan Mal however was the first to appoint for the Sikhs of each town an officer to receive from them an obligatory tribute and the Sikhs began to collect money through these *musnads*. The most important *musnads* through whom many people became disciples of the guru (*sikhān-i gurū*) appointed, on their turn, vice-gerents (*nā'ib*) so that in every place people may become *mēli*<sup>43</sup> of that *musnad* and therefore disciples of the Guru. And it was also decided that to be *udāsī* (monk) should not be considered as a praiseworthy practice in religion...".<sup>44</sup>) The further and final stage of the transformation of the old bhākta movement into the "Sikh Nation" was the well known military reform of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last Sikh Guru (1675-1708).

If we compare the history of Sikhism to that of Islam we notice an almost exactly reverse order of spiritual events. In Islam regular taxation (*zakāt*) and military organization come first<sup>45</sup>), followed, in a further elaboration, by attempts at mystical orders and devotional mysticism. In Sikhism we pass from a very loosely organized mystical community to a system of regular taxation and military organization. Apart from the obvious historical reasons of the differences, one cannot ignore the typological root of this "reverse order" of development: early Sikhism was assimilable to monotheism only from an outward point of view, as we showed before. A further proof is the latest stage of Sikh history, which brought to a partial reabsorption of Sikhs into Hindu society (a reabsorption, not a creation of a new mixed culture as in Christian Latin America or in Indonesian Islam).

This brings us to discuss a further aspect of the teaching of Monotheism, i.e. the final cultural results of this teaching. The *Dabistān*, comparing the monotheistization of Iran to that of India, characteristically says (op. cit. p. 211) that the people of the different sects of pre-islamic Iran "entered the habits and customs of the Muslims

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43) A Sikh technical term literally meaning "partaker".

44) Persian text in *Dabistan*, Lucknow ed. 1904, pp. 232 ff. See also: G. Chand NARANG, *Transformation of Sikhism*, New Delhi, 1960.

45) Of course, in a relative sense: at its very beginning, during the life of Muhammad *zakāt* was not greatly different from voluntary "alms", but it developed into a law very soon.

(*ba-libās-i musalmān dar raft*) secretly preserving their religion” whereas “in India too there were different sects (*firaq*), but they did not dress in Muslim garb”. (In other words, they remained not only inwardly but also outwardly Hindus). The reason is that “the Hindus too have a *sharīʿat* called by them *smṛti* <sup>46)</sup>”: the Iranian sects were philosophico-theological schools not having a special *sharīʿat* (1 a w) and could be followed also under the garb of Islam <sup>47)</sup>, whereas the Hindu sects are something beyond pure theology, they are rooted in customs and laws. Here the Author of the *Dabistān* seems to recognize an outward typological similarity between Hinduism and Islam (both possessing a 1 a w) neglecting however the very important fact that the God-given Islamic *sharīʿat* has been always traditionally conceived as the enemy of those *ʿādāt* and *rusūm* (habits, traditions, of archaic origin) that the Prophet of Islam had been sent to d e s t r o y <sup>48)</sup>. With a truly Islamic spirit he seems to recognize however that “the faith of the heart” and only that is not a sufficient guarantee against conversion to a foreign culture. The Muslims always felt this “social difficulty” in converting Hindus and expressed it variously. In the *Farwāʿid al-fuʿād* of Amīr Ḥasan Sijzī (d. 1337) a *tazkira* of facts and legends referring specially to the great Čištī saint of Muslim India Nizāmuddīn Auliyaʾ (1238-1325) <sup>49)</sup> it is related that one of his disciples came one day to him with his brother, a Hindu. Nizāmuddīn asked him whether his brother showed any inclination towards Islam. The disciple answered: “It is just for this reason that I brought him to you, in the hope that he may become a Muslim under your influence (*naẓar-i iltifāt*). With tears in his eyes Nizāmuddīn answered: Speaking (i.e. conversion through preaching) does not have any effect on these people. If he frequents some pious man;

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46) The Persian text has *smārt*. Probably this is an adaptation from Sanscr. *smārta*, the legists who codified Hinduism after the Muslim conquests. *Smṛti* is, as it is well known, “the Holy tradition”.

47) The Author of the *Dabistān* seems to ignore the Zoroastrian religious 1 a w, and seems to attribute a special importance only to the ideological contents of pre-Islamic Iranian religion or religions. In reality the Zoroastrian traditional 1 a w was no more than a dry involucre already in Sasanian times.

48) There is a famous ḥadīth that says that the religion of Islam “has come to abolish the *rusūm*” (traditions, habits, customs) of pagan Arabia (tribal pride, racial genealogy etc.).

49) One of the greatest saints of the Muslim sufi Order called Čištīya, spread in India by Muʿīnuddīn Čištī (1142-1235).

however, perhaps he may become Muslim through his holy influence (*baraka*)”<sup>50</sup>). And the same saint was once confronted with the problem, frequent, as it seems, amongst Hindu converts, of people who accepted the ideology of Islam but refused to have free and brotherly intercourse with the other Muslims for caste reasons<sup>51</sup>).

Muslim India is like a great laboratory in which we can study different aspects of conversion methods with their cultural results. The most efficacious for Islam has been the typically primary monotheistic system of mass conversion through the assumption of power by a Muslim élite. The first generation of converts may be rather lukewarm “inwardly”, but their adoption of the new outward law and customs is too easily controllable, and no penetration of pre-monotheistic habits is therefore possible: the second and third generations are staunch and firm Muslims. It is the way followed in the great sunnī conquests by Maḥmūd of Ghazna (X-XI cc.) and by the Mughal conquerors (Babar, end of XV c.) that islamized North-India. Conversion was often “perfected” in a second time by the influence of the sufis, generally striving rather to strengthen the internal faith of the (new and old) Muslims than to get new adepts from Hinduism through personal preaching<sup>52</sup>). The result of this double system has been, from the Muslim point of view, excellent and made of the Muslims of the northern part of the Pak-Indian Subcontinent perhaps the best specimens of Muslims in existence, generally extremely orthodox and showing no inclination at all to Hindu customs<sup>53</sup>), though

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50) *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* p. 182. Quoted in S. M. IKRĀM. *Āb-i kauthar* (A history, in Urdu, of Muslim culture in pre-Mughal India). Karachi, 1952, pp. 281-282.

51) *Fawā'id al-fu'ād* p. 135, quoted in the above mentioned work, p. 282.

52) Ikrām, in the useful book mentioned in note 50, follows T. W. Arnold's theory of the generally pacific spread of Islam only in part, showing with many examples that the chief task of many Indo-Muslim sufis was rather that of deepening the faith of Muslims than that of spreading it amongst Hindu through preaching (see pp. 85, 212-219, 226-227, and *passim*). It must not be forgotten, moreover, that the majority of the cases of conversions referred to in Arnold and Ikrām's books happened in zones already politically under Muslim rule.

53) One often hears (and reads) the repeated and generic statement that Indian Islam, due to its Hindu “substrate” has “special” characteristics etc. A deeper and nearer study seems to show (at least for what concerns Islam in Northern India) contrary results and Indian Muslims, even in recent times when, say, in Persia, a Europe-inspired form of romantic nationalism brings people to “reconstruct” more or less imaginary ties with the pre-Islamic past, consider

more ready than other "older" Muslims to discuss religious matters even with foreigners (perhaps led to this by the habitual presence of "pagans" in their milieu). The linguistic results are also interesting. A conversion of this type generally creates a so called mixed-language, like New Persian in Iran and Urdu in India <sup>54</sup>). In the Muslim languages of Northern India, as in New Persian, the entire or almost entire lexical suprastructure is foreign (Arabic or Arabo-Persian) whereas the infrastructure (morphology, numerals, terms of everyday life) remains "local". In an Urdu sentence like this, taken at random from a modern Urdu book: "*Gradually the fame of his asceticism and piety began to be widespread and people came in crowds*", all the words in italics are of non-Indian origin, the rest only (expressing the dynamic infrastructure of language) is Indian. This archaic substratum is felt so (culturally) unimportant by the average Muslims of North India that sometimes we can find strange linguistic theories put forward to demonstrate the non-Indianness of this and that Muslim language <sup>55</sup>). I recently read in the interesting Brahui periodical *Ēlum* ("The Brother") of Mastung (Beluchistan) an article stating that Brahui is *not* a Dravidian language (as all linguists agree in considering it), because, amongst other reasons, in that language Arabic expressions like *yā Husain!* or words like *azal*, *azalī* (eternal) et similia are in common use (as in all Muslim languages, by the way). Brahui is therefore of Arabic origin (the fact that Brahui possesses a complete system of negative verbs of typically Dravidian

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themselves "heirs" not of Hindu Indians but of the Arabs, and Arabian customs their "old-Testament". (See, for instance, the famous *Musaddas* by A. H. HĀLĪ, the poet of the Indo-Muslim risorgimento, and his praises to the Arabs). The Hindu influence exerted itself, one could say, in a negative way, rendering the Indian Muslims more "conscious" of their Islam. See also note 57.

54) In some cases also (as it happened with the conversion of Syria and Egypt) the pre-Islamic language practically disappears completely, substituted by Arabic. Artificial (and failed) attempts to declare Arabic the language of the young Muslim state of Pakistan has been made repeatedly since its creation.

55) Another proof of the greater "Islamic consciousness" of Indian Muslims (see note 53). In Turkey and Iran, where the "Islamic consciousness" seems to have been weakened under the impact of Western secularism, the contrary attempts (often, also in this case, exaggerated) are done, viz. that of insisting on the respectively Turanian or Aryan linguistic backgrounds, and on radical "purism" (struggle against Arabo-Persian words in Turkish, and against Arabic words in Persian).

structure is left completely out of the discussion!).<sup>56</sup>) In fact the suprastructure of Brahui, as that of any other Muslim mixed language is of Arabic (or Arabo-Persian) origin, as that of modern English is of Latin origin, though nobody now would think of calling English a Latin language.<sup>57</sup>)

A conversion system much more similar to that followed by secondary monotheisms was used by the gnostic or half gnostic (tendentially "secondary") Islamic sects or in some cases by the merchant-missionaries of South India. And the cultural results are remarkably different. The first Ismaili *dā'īs* of Sindh and Gujerat like Nūr Satāgar who came from Alamūt to Gujerat in the XII c. or Pīr Ṣadrudīn (according to Ismaili traditions he was born in Sabzawār, Iran, in 1300 and died at the respectable age of 118 years in 1418) penetrated the hearts of the people to be converted, as it were, "from inside". They did not force them to change their Hindu names into new Muslim ones (the changing of name is often a symbol of a more radical cultural change) but behaved exactly like the Jesuit missionaries who originated the famous question of the "Malabar rites" at the beginning of XVII c., trying more or less fanciful cultural-religious "identifications". So in the book attributed to Pīr Ṣadrudīn with the title of *Dasāvatār* (The Ten Incarnations, a Hindu term) 'Alī was "identified" with the tenth *āvatār* of Vishnu, whereas Brahma was Muḥammad, and Śiva Adam.<sup>58</sup>) Attention especially to low castes, not

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56) 'Abu'l-Qādir Shahwānī, *Brāhūī šarbu'l-amṣāl aur muḥāwarāt* in "Ēlum", Mastung, vol. II, no. 13, 1st sept. 1961.

57) Rather an exception is that showed by Bengali. The majority of Bengalis are Muslims, but their language does not show great differences from that of non-Muslim Bengalis. Even now that the Bengali Muslims concentrated themselves in the Province of East Pakistan and have political power in their hands, they did not abolish the Bengali script, derived from Hindu writing, and preserve many "Hindu" culture-words (one can even find popular works in praise of the great Muslim mystic Ḥallāj with the title of "*Mahārshī Maṇṣūr*"! See A. SCHIMMEL, *The Martyr Mystic Ḥallāj in Sindhī folk-poetry*, in "Numen", vol. IX, 3, 1962, p. 198). The reasons are various, but the chief one is that Islam was introduced in Bengal through comparatively pacific methods and in the same time the Bengali literature of Hindu origin was very popular and showed a remarkable vitality, together with Hinduism, side by side with Islam. Recent tendencies to spread the *hurūf al-Qur'ān* ("the letters of the Qur'ān", the Arabic alphabet) and Arabo-Persian loanwords (a strange, conscious antipurism!) in Pakistani Bengal do not seem to have had great success.

58) See Ikrām, op. cit., p. 392.

great importance attributed to law and customs (acceptance of local customs with signification changed) use of the local languages into which Arabic and Persian terms were not superposed but translated with a process of (sometimes bold) identification, are the chief cultural aspects of this kind of propaganda, which created Muslim or para-Muslim communities structurally quite different from the Northern orthodox ones<sup>59</sup>).

A still different teaching method is that represented in the Islamic monotheism by the merchant-missionaries, which created the coastal Muslim communities of Malabar and Malayo-Indonesian Islam<sup>60</sup>). This method, though generally pacific, is not however based on the "identification" of religious-cultural concepts and brings about a change in culture that, though not so radical as that produced by the "military" system, is not similar to that brought about by the purely "comparative preaching" of Indian Ismailism.

The problems of a cultural historical continuity after the mass conversions to monotheisms are particularly interesting. They can better be exemplified in a graphic and practical way by the different reactions in front of an ancient pre-monotheistic building or monument. A Persian Muslim poet like Khâqânî (XII c.) in front of

59) One of the defects of Arnold's already mentioned book is that he makes no typological distinctions and puts on the same plane the Northern Indian sufi preaching and Pîr Şadrudî'n's *Dasāvātār*.

60) The merchant-missionary theory was until some time ago the common explanation for the islamization of Indonesia. New theories have been now proposed by different authors, which, however, do not affect our statement that the spread of Islam was, at least at its beginning, generally pacific but not based on the "identification" method of Pîr Şadrudî'n's type. For a summary of new theories on the islamization of Indonesia see the remarkable book by C. A. O. VAN NIEUWENHUIJZEN, *Aspects of Islam in post-colonial Indonesia*, The Hague 1958, pp. 35 ff.

The conversion system used by Muslims in front of Ethiopians and Negroes of Africa is typologically similar to this. In the Galla language "Muslim" is *naggādi*, "merchant", and in many African countries the conversion method is the merchant — şūfî combination, with cultural results in many ways similar to those obtained in Indonesia (e.g. historical reinterpretation of local pagan cults etc.) A study of African Muslim missions would enlarge too much this already rather long essay; for some aspects of the Muslim teaching methods in Ethiopia see now E. CERULLI, *L'Islam en Ethiopie: sa signification historique, et ses méthodes* in "Correspondance d'Orient", 5, Bruxelles, 1961, with further bibliography.



the ruins of the ancient Ctesiphon<sup>61</sup>) does not give any importance to the fact that they were a product of the genius of the Persian race but simply considers their ethical and philosophical aspect: they are things of the past, no more valid now, though once they had been an authentic symbol of culture. They passed away as all passes away: the typical attitude of the primary monotheistic culture towards a past which has been substituted by a new law. The ruins of the past, as they are now, can only suggest this: moral considerations. The maximum of "archeology" that a man of this culture can reach would be the reconstruction of such buildings as a curiosity. What I say is not only a theoretical consideration: a Persian friend of mine looking for the first time at the Colosseum of Rome (after having visited a rather excessive quantity of various "old things" and ruins) had this rather unexpected reaction: "Very interesting. But why keep these ruins like that, spoiling the beautiful panorama of a modern city? Build a modern palace around it, cover it, and create a closed museum!" The "secondary monotheistic" attitude in front of things like the Colosseum or the Palatine is that embodied in a well known Christian sentence: "this too is ours", with nuances going from an absolute identification to new "things" (the Indian Ismaili method of Pīr Ṣadrudīn) to a historical absorption from a new active centre (Christian method). After the European impact on Islamic culture, there are also men like an ʿEshqī, looking at these same ruins of old Ctesiphon with different, nationalistic eyes<sup>62</sup>): Persians should be ashamed to have let all this fall down. It is an attitude, however, quite different from that of the historically autochthonous nationalism of Europe, and, in its extremest form, it would be tantamount as to say: it is a pity that we Persians adopted Islam!<sup>63</sup>) Being law the central part of a primary monotheistic culture, phenomena of productive historical digestion and absorption from a centre can be studied

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61) The Sasanian capital of pre-Islamic Iran. The elegy to Ctesiphon by Khā-qānī and the cultural problems of "continuity" in modern Iran have been studied by me in my booklet *I Persiani*, Florence, 1962 pp. 248 ff.

62) On ʿEshqī (d. 1924) see my *Storia della letteratura Persiana*, Milano, 1960 pp. 853-855.

63) Statements like this, or amounting to this, have been actually made by some nationalist elements of the contemporary Persian élite. See my article: *I fondamenti culturali dell'Iran moderno: Maometto o Dario?*, in *AIUON*, N.S. vol. IX, 1960, pp. 40-41.

in their best form in the evolution of social customs and legislation rather than in that of religious ideas or art: jurisprudence reveals itself once again the most rewarding historical study in the field of Islam <sup>64</sup>). A more "historical" attitude of modern revaluation of an ancient monument seems the reaction of T. Alisjahbana <sup>65</sup>) in front of the ruins of one of the Śivaite temples of Prambanan in Central Java. After imagining, in a beautiful page, a *pandit* of the old Hindu times kneeling in front of Śiva in total devotion to his holy *śakti* <sup>66</sup>) the modern Indonesian author exclaims: "And yet I don't feel homesick towards thee, o time when the *pandit* knelt in front of Śiva, when the devoted soul embodied itself in the temple of sculpted stone. No, no! O my God! Inspire again into thy *Ummat* that same sincerity and intensity of feeling which those who created this temple once possessed! And only then we shall generate a new art, not of the same aspect and form as this, but perfectly harmonized with the tempests of our present soul, of our time!" <sup>67</sup>). It is a remarkably modern view of the problem of cultural continuity: the only subtle difference lies perhaps in the interpretation to give to that word, new. Our modern concept of historical continuity in relation to (historical) newness seems here to cede again to the typical "primary monotheistic" feeling of a discontinuous history in which unity and continuity can be perceived only looking from the point of view of the transcendent and autonomous will of God. In reality the problem of "continuity after conversion", when a "primitive" or "pre-monotheistic" or "closed" community accepts a monotheistic religion, being

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64) Only in jurisprudence, perhaps, the "archaeological" pre-monotheistic elements, and somehow also folkloric elements have been absorbed and revalued and islamized in a truly "historical" way and even now (see adaptation of the *shari'at* to modern constitutions etc.) Muslim jurisprudence reveals itself as a much more elastic frame (and jurists much more "historically" minded) than one could have foreseen.

65) The well known modern Indonesian writer (b. 1908). The passage in question was written in 1933 in Prambanan. The great temple of Prambanan, called Tjandi Lara Djonggrang, was built (ca. 900 A.D.) by the Hindu (Śivaite) princes of Mataram.

66) Meaning "power", is the feminine aspect of Śiva, and his wife.

67) I translate from the Indonesian text given in C. HOOPYKAAS, *Penjedar Sastera*, Djakarta 1952 p. 112. The text was first published in *Pudjangga Baru*, I, jan. 1933.

the "closed community" by definition a community without history, <sup>68</sup>) identifies itself with the problem of creating a sense of history, of "historicizing" a primitive culture. One of the ways of this historicization is the ethical *Umdeutung* of the magico-archaic motifs of the preceding culture. Though taken from a farcical Malay folk-tale having as its protagonist the "simpleton" Pa' Pandir, this first paragraph of one of the innumerable stories of the Malay Bertoldo is rather significant. Once upon a time *mak* Andeh (Pa' Pandir's wife, almost always the "refined" and modern element in front of the "absurd" primitivity of Pa' Pandir) told to Pa' Pandir: "Hei, Pa' Pandir! What happens to us that it is such a long time we don't make a *khenduri* <sup>69</sup>) for our grandfathers and grandmothers and family members and sons who died?" Pa' Pandir answered: "Let's go, and you, Andeh, bring fruits, sugar cane, bananas, *ubi* and *kelé-dek* <sup>70</sup>) and let us dig up their tombs and put them there so that they may eat them". But Andeh answered: "Not so! They are dead and the dead don't feel any wish to eat. With the *khenduri* we simply help them, praying God that He may bestow on them the bliss of Paradise..." <sup>71</sup>) Pa' Pandir represents here in a way the "primitive" in front of the Muslim. The simpleton's interpretation of *khenduri* is, after all, what the "primitives" see in that old magical rite (reduced, of course, by the Muslim author to its more vulgar aspect). Andeh's reinterpretation (the "new", Muslim, interpretation) opens the way to an elementary sense of history. The old *khenduri* is absorbed, not destroyed, more or less in the same way as, for our historical sense, are the Palatine and Colosseum. This is a further instance of what

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68) I am well aware that this statement is rather vague. But, giving to "history" the western European meaning we generally give to it (and which, after all, I consider a late fruit of Monotheism) one can in a general way assert that the culture of a closed community or of an archaic civilization is tendentially a-historical.

69) *Khenduri* is the corruption of a Persian word and is in Malay a synonymous of *selamatan* (of Arabic origin) meaning what the Muhammadan law calls a *wali-mah* (religious banquet). Such banquets were used also in pre-Islamic Indonesia and, as Kern puts it (R. A. KERN, *De Islam in Indonesië*, 's-Gravenhage 1947, p. 77) "na de komst van den Islam is men daarmee voortgegaan, maar heeft hun een Mohammedaans stempel gegeven zonder hen naar de aanwijzingen der Wet te vervormen".

70) Various kinds of eatable tubers.

71) I translate from the Malay text given in *Chërta Jenaka dan Pënglipor Lara* (Kësusastëraan Mëlayu: Rampai-rampai IV), London 1958, p. 7.

we said before, that a beginning of a true sense of history, in a law culture as that of Islam, can be studied better in the field of jurisprudence (in the widest sense of the word). The old rite being absorbed and re-interpreted, it is in the same time dead and alive: history may begin. The fire-cult, in Iran, was not absorbed, or re-interpreted, but forgotten: the "ancient testament" of Muslim Iran was not — therefore — so much the old Iranian pre-Islamic tradition as rather the old Arabian pre-Islamic tradition<sup>72</sup>). In India, the situation was somewhat different, as the pre-monotheistic Hindu rites and practices were continuously reminded by the presence of the contemporary Hindus, Pre-monotheism was destroyed in the Muslims' consciences but was still alive around them.

This particular situation gives to Indian (Northern) Islam its characteristically orthodox and at the same time enthusiastic aspect: the *shari'at* (canon law) has been for the Muslims of India something to be lived mystically, something not felt as a stern and rigid fetter, but as a spiritual "protection" of living utility, and even the mystics — in other Muslim countries often rather unattentive to *shari'at*<sup>73</sup>) — show there a somewhat passionate love for the Law, comparable to that of the Jewish mystics for the Torah. The episode of the hindu *taḥṣildār* Nawāhūn is typical not so much in itself (similar episodes happened often in India) but because its Muslim protagonist is a mystic famous for his rigid penitence and his otherworldly asceticism. At the death bed of the well known sufi saint Makhdūm-i Jahānīyān (real name Jalāl Ḥusain Bukhārī, d. 1384), the unfortunate hindu *taḥṣildār* (sub-collector of revenue) of Ucc,

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72) This statement may seem a bit too radical, but is perhaps useful, to show cultural differences more clearly. Obviously one could remind me of Firdausi's *Shāhnāme*, in which the ancient pre-Islamic past of Iran is, in a way, extolled and epically praised. But, objectively, the preislamic contents of the *Shāhnāme* compared with what we know from original pre-islamic sources, show just how vague the knowledge of pre-Islamic religion was, after the Muslim conquest.

73) In spite of the fact that the contrast *shari'at* (Law)-*ṭariqat* (mystic practice) has been often exaggerated by Western scholars, it is a fact that it was often deeply felt by Muslim mystics, who chose *ṭariqat* as a "higher stage". Perhaps only in Muslim India it is possible to find a mystic that goes so far as to affirm that *ṭariqat* and *ḥaqīqat* (supreme mystical intuition of the Holy Truth) are "the servants of the *shari'at*" (*khādīmān-i shari'at*), as shaykh Ahmad of Sirhind did (1564-1624) (See my article on another mystic-legalist of India: *Note su Shāh Walīullāh di Delhi (1703-1762)*, in AIUON, N.S. vol. X (1961) p. 144 n. 49).

probably as a compliment to the great saint, said to him: "In the same way as Muḥammad is the Seal of Prophets you are the Seal of Saints!" This statement was considered by those present, and especially by the enthusiast mystic Rājū Qattāl as equivalent to the *shahāda* (Muslim profession of faith: "there is no god but God and Muḥammad is His Prophet") the simple utterance of which in front of witnesses makes of a man a Muslim. "Now — he said to the Hindu — you are a Muslim and you must follow the Law of Islam, otherwise you will be condemned to death, as a *murtadd* (apostate)". The *taḥṣildār*, whose Hindu mentality did not understand why he should have been killed for having said words of praise to the Prophet of Islam, fled to Delhi where the military Muslim authorities showed much more comprehension for his awkward position than the pious mystic. But Rājū Qattāl, not content of prayers and protestations, left his place and undertook the rather troublesome travel to Delhi for the sole purpose of defending his contention that the *taḥṣildār* had to be put to death, if he was not ready to confirm by facts (law) his purely "spiritual" acceptance of Islam. In spite of all opposition (including even "legal tricks") the poor Hindu was executed<sup>74</sup>). The Muslim ascetic was in love of the *sharīʿat* almost as a Christian ascetic is in love of Christ or a Hindu bhākta of Kṛṣṇa! Cruel as this procedure may seem, it is, in a way, typologically "logical". For a primary monotheism the faith of the heart is not enough, because, for it, theology or dogmas are not essential and one has little hopes in a "changing" (conversion) based on an unessential centre of absorption. It is true that, according to Muslim law, one has to pronounce the formula of the *shahāda* with a sincere conviction of the heart, but this sincere conviction itself is required by law, is *sharīʿat*-centered. When we read in the rather naive account of the conversion of the pagan king of North Sumatra Merah Silu<sup>75</sup>) to Islam, that the dignitaries and

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74) Ikrām, op. cit. pp. 320-321.

75) The episode is related in the Malay Chronicle *Hikayat Raja-Raja Pasai* (edition by A. H. HILL in "JRAS Malayan Branch", vol. XXXIII, 2, 1960: text pp. 57-58, transl. pp. 118-119). It is true that the king had previously a dream in which Muḥammad himself explained to him the meaning of the act he was going to do, but his subjects and dignitaries knew nothing of this dream. It is also characteristic that, in the dream, after having taught him the *shahādah*, the Prophet Muḥammad tells him, that, as his first duty, he has not to eat animals not slaughtered ritually.

subjects of Merah Silu (after his conversion called al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ) recited the Arabic *shahāda*, never heard by them before and in a strange language <sup>76</sup>) *dengan tulus ikhlas yakin hati-nya* ("in all sincerity and with true belief in their hearts") we must not accuse the pious Author of hypocrisy: it is the legal, voluntarist aspect of the *shahāda* that counts more than its theologico-dogmatic contents, and the voluntarist sincerity may be well present even in one who does not clearly understand its ideological implications. <sup>77</sup>)

On the contrary secondary monotheistic teaching methods have been and are inspired to the confidence that the "interior faith of the heart" has the power of changing and transforming the whole life of individuals and communities. This is comprehensible, once one has in mind the different typological scheme of secondary monotheistic religions. The Bahā'ī teaching methods, now exercised on a very large scale <sup>78</sup>), seem however inspired by a *conscious* effort to create "a new

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76) The strangeness of Arabic language to Malays is more than once referred to in Malay classical books. The most amusing of the passages showing this linguistic incompatibility is perhaps the episode of the lessons of Arabic given by the Arab missionary Sadr Jahan to the dignitary of the Court of Malacca Seri Rama, related in chapt. XXXII of the *Sējarah Mēlayu*. From this and many other texts one can easily deduce the antipathy of some elements of the Malayo-Indonesian "aristocracy" towards foreign missionaries and merchants.

77) We must not forget that the *shahāda* is studied in treatises of Muslim law under the *ʿibādāt*, acts of worship, and is considered of the same order as fasting, canonical prayer, pilgrimage etc.

A study of many seemingly "theological" Muslim concepts from a juridical point of view would be repaying. Only to mention one example, it is not improbable — in my opinion — that the frequency of the divine attributes of "mercy" (*raḥmān, raḥīm, karīm* etc.) in Islam may be due to this very important juridical reason: the Divine Law is something perfect, untouchable and absolute on one hand, but, confronted with reality, it is continuously open to possible "exceptions". Affirmations as: "This is the absolute duty, but, after all, God is generous and merciful..." are often read in the Qurʾān and function as a good theological guarantee of the possibility of legal exceptions. This would also explain the contrast — often referred to by Christian writers — between the extremely frequent recurrence of "the attributes of grace" in the Qurʾān, and the strong "Old Testament character" of the Islamic God.

78) Recent (1962) news tell of "mass conversions" to Bahā'ism especially in India (zone of Ujjain especially), Indonesia (Mentawai Islands especially) Africa (more than 30.000 new believers in Uganda and East Africa), native Indians of Latin America (especially Bolivia) and even Eskimos and Australian Aborigines. On the recent developments of Bahā'ī Administration see the article by H. Grossmann. *Die Ausbreitung und gegenwärtige Aktivität der Bahā'ī-Religion, insbesondere in Amerika und Europa*, in "Zeitschr. für Religions- und Geistesge-

civilization" through the divinely given new Law (the so called "Administrative Order"), thus showing some points of contact with the primary monotheistic concept of a Law-Religion. For what concerns Christianity too we are far from a purely "faith of the heart" method. The diffusion of Christianity in America by Spaniards and Portuguese shows some remarkable aspect of "primary monotheistic" systems whereas, for instance, Protestant evangelization is generally more of the "secondary" type. In spite of the widely diffused prejudices against the Latin colonization of America, Roman Catholic intolerance etc., it is clear enough from facts that even the "faith of the heart" method can hide a good dose of wishful thinking and self-deceiving, not to say hypocrisy. The Presbyterian Missionaries in Oceania, consciously or unconsciously starting from the conviction of an incurable inferiority of the natives, insisted on their sole and only obligation of "praying, praying, praying" and "singing, singing, singing" <sup>79</sup>). The results were, for Christians deeply convinced of the miraculous and automatic effect of the εὐαγγέλιον (glad tidings) in the hearts, rather disappointing. As C. Kelly, speaking of the aborigines of East Australia, comments: "if by the term 'convert' we indicate one who has turned from his old way of life repudiating and relinquishing it entirely in favour of another mode of life, then the Aborigines are *not* converts" <sup>80</sup>). Linguistically (the linguistic aspect of these problems, rarely studied, is in my opinion rather important) the results of this kind of "teaching methods" are something similar to the horrible jargon called Melanesian pidgin or "beach-la-mar", the result of a rather complex (and hypocritical) mental attitude: on one hand "we don't want to force our culture and civilization on them as the Spaniards did destroying Mexico" (pseudo-liberalism) and on the other hand: "the language of these people is incapable of expressing high truths, and not worthy of being studied" (racism). For those not acquainted with pidgin it may be interesting to study

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schichte" X (1958), 4, pp. 386 ff. This mass teaching of a new monotheism amongst people belonging to "closed communities" will certainly produce highly interesting cultural results, which is however premature to study now.

79) J. GUIART, *John Frum Movement in Tanna* in "Oceania" XXII, 3, 1952 p. 172, quoted by V. LANTERNARI, *Origini storiche dei culti profetici melanesiani*, in SMSR vol. XXVII, 1956, p. 45, Lanternari's article contains very acute considerations on the problem of monotheistic missions in "primitive" countries.

80) Quoted in Lanternari op. cit. p. 60.

a short paragraph taken from a Missionary booklet containing short "Lives of the Saints" published by the Roman Catholic Missionaries of Alexishafen (N.E. New Guinea)<sup>81</sup> reproduced here in the normal English orthography, instead of the phonetic spelling adopted in the publications of that missionary centre:

*Santu Felix Priest*

Felix he one-blood belong all king belong France. Him he young-fellow, him he sorry plenty long rubbish-man. Half *kai-kai* belong him, half money belong him, half cloth belong him, all he go long all rubbish-man....

(*English translation*): "Felix was a relative of the kings of France. When he was a boy he had great pity for the poor. He divided with them his food (*kai-kai* is one of the very few really Melanesian words used in this jargon) his money and his clothes...".

In sharp contrast with these cultural-linguistic results of the "sing and pray" method stand (to remain in the field of Austronesian languages and cultures) those achieved in the Philippines by the so often condemned "Spanish" systems of forced acculturation. In order to give a graphic impression of the differences, I consider interesting to discuss the *tagalog* epic of "Florante and Laura" by the Philipino writer Francisco Baltasar (pseud. "Balagtas") (1788-1862). This poem written in an Indonesian language with Spanish loanwords (not a *jargon*, but a vigorous local language, vivified, not — as in the case of Melanesian — half extinguished by monotheistization!) in *awit* metre (quatrains of monorhime dodecasyllable verses) may make a strange and even humorous effect on a European reader who might consider it a curious pastiche and a slavish imitation of XVIII century Spanish popular "romances"; but we must not forget that it is con-

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81) To call Melanesian pidgin "horrible" may seem "unscientific" to those who have a purely "philological" idea of science. My personal opinion is that to consider Melanesian pidgin as a "language" on the same plane as other "natural" languages implies a certain amount of colonialistic wishful thinking, besides being, after all, "unscientific"! The best philologico-phenomenological account of *beach-la-mar* is that of R. A. HALL jr., *Melanesian Pidgin English: Grammar, texts, vocabulary*, Baltimore 1943. I have taken the short text reproduced below, from the booklet *Stori bilong ol Santu* (Stories of Saints) Westmead-Alexishafen, 1946 p. 37.



sidered a "lovable and immortal epic" by the Filipinos <sup>82</sup>), who see in it an allegory of the sufferings of their country under the Spanish domination! As this poem is not generally known outside the narrow circle of specialists in Filipino literature, I give a short summary of its culturally very curious plot:

In a forest at the outskirts of the kingdom of Albania stands the christian Florante, tied to a big *higuera* tree <sup>83</sup>), despairing of his life and recalling in wild imagination the beautiful Laura, whom he thinks unfaithful to their sacred trust. In the same forest roams another man, a *Moro*, Aladin, who, at the end, encounters and frees Florante. The two relate to each other their sad stories and one comes to know that Florante is the son of *duque* Briseo and Princess Floresca. Sent to Athens to study (the naive illustrations of Filipino booklets show here the images of classical temples in a city where people bear such incongruous names as Adolfo, Antenor and Menandro!) he arouses the bitter hatred and enmity of his companion, the traitor Adolfo, fights against the barbarous armies of Aladin (his own saviour!) led by generals with names like Osmalik, Miramolin etc. In Athens he falls also in love with beautiful Laura, daughter of king Linceo, a maiden whose glances are similar to the sparklings of the star of Venus and whose black hair hang loose on the pearls of her neck (siyang pamimitak at kusang nagsabog / ng ningning ang talang kaagaw ni Benus / anaki ay bagong umahon sa bubog / buhok ay naglugay sa perlas na batok), a real "bait of Cupido" (pain ni Kupidong...). Laura is however taken away from him, together with the kingdom of Albania, by the cruel and treacherous Adolfo. Aladin reveals too his being and his story: his cruel father Ali Adab has taken by force Florida, his beloved, and he left his kingdom of Persia in bitter anger. Strangely enough both Florida and Laura are in the same forest and also narrate their stories to each other. Florida has left Persia disguised as a warrior to search for her beloved Aladin, but during her wanderings she came across Laura and saved her from the traitor Adolfo, killing him. The happy end is, of course, inevitable: the good

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82) So in the introduction of the Filipino popular booklet *Florante at Laura. Isang bagong Nobela* rearranged by P. R. VILLANUEVA, Manila 1949. From this booklet are taken my summary and quotations.

83) Words indicating object unfamiliar to the Filipinos (*higuera*, fig-tree, *duque* etc.) correspond exactly to the "exotic" vocables in our adventure novels.

Balagtas — who far from singing and praying only, had studied in his youth “the depths of philosophy” (of course Thomistic) with a father Mariano Pilapil, like his hero Florante in Athens (*na tarok ang lalim ng pilosopiya*) — converts Aladin and Florida who take the baptism and marry lawfully (kapwa tumanggap na mangabinyagan <sup>84</sup>) / magkakaisang sinta’y naraos nakasal) and, at the death of Sultan Ali Adab go back to Persia and reign there, while Florante and Laura ascend the throne of Albania, reigning in peace. (Namatay ang bunying Sultang Ali-Adab / nuwi si Aladin sa Persyang s’yudad / ang Duke Florante sa trono’y naakyat / sa siping ni Laurang minumutyang liyag).

A quite particular case of “teaching monotheism” is the attempt to convert to one’s own ‘monotheism’ adepts of another form of monotheism. The extreme difficulty to convert Muslims to Christianity (or conversely the great difficulty for modern Muslims to find adepts among Christians) is a well-known and often discussed fact. The explanations given to this phenomenon are not always satisfactory and generally ignore the typological aspects of the problem. The chief difficulty is, in my opinion, just a typological one, inasmuch as the missionaries of both parts seem to concentrate on the more or less absolute truth of their religions, neglecting their respective structure. To make only one example, the *argumentum princeps* brought by Christians to convert Muslims is that of a moral and spiritual superiority of Jesus Christ on Muhammad demonstrable through a comparison between the personalities of the founders of the two religions <sup>85</sup>). This comparison rarely affects Muslims very much, and, in reality, a deeper typological knowledge of Christianity and Islam would show that a comparison between a Christ considered as the “incarnated Word of God” and Muhammad, a simple and human Prophet, is *a priori* a failure. Two comparable entities could rather be Christ and the Qur’ān, being the first the Word of God made manifest in a God-man and the second the Word of God made mani-

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84) Note that the word for baptism is *not* Spanish, but “translated”, whereas words like *ciudad* and *trono* are Spanish.

85) Most frequent results of these comparisons: Jesus was chaste, Muhammad had many wives; Jesus was born from a Virgin, Muhammad was a common man etc. Even books were written to show that the miracles of Jesus were true and those attributed to Muhammad false. (For example: ‘Abd al-Masīḥ Ghalwīrī [pseud. of F. Roberto Focà] *Les miracles de Mahomet*, Harissa- Alger, 1937).

fest in a God-book<sup>86</sup>). Further attempts in argumentation should bear on convincing the opposite part that the idea of a manifestation of God in flesh is religiously more productive than that of a Manifestation of God in paper (less paradoxically, in a Law). The result might perhaps be that the Muslim could answer that such attempts are present (and in a way much more comprehensible and familiar to him) in his own religious history (extreme forms of *ghuluww* or ḥal-lājism<sup>87</sup>) or Bābism and Bahā'ism). In the opposite direction the Muslim's *argumentum princeps* is a demonstration, conducted often in an almost illuministic and voltairian way, of the silliness and illogicity of the dogmas<sup>88</sup>) of Trinity and Incarnation, nay, of their being blasphemous. The Muslim however forgets, in this argumentation of his, that the idea of God in Christianity is structurally different from his own, and in order to convince his adversary, he should first study this structural diversity better, and then try to convince the Christian that his own idea of a free, arbitrary and totally "monolithic" God is religiously more productive than that of the Christians. To which the Christian could object that he knows the idea already, it is that of the God of the Old Testament! Both parties, on the point of "conversion", would have the feeling to go back to something "older", that they already know: the Muslim to go back to the pagan legends of the dying Gods etc., the Christian to go back to Old Testament, a feeling which is psychologically the coup de grace against any possible "conversion"<sup>89</sup>). A discussion between mono-

86) F. SCHÜON, who first introduced this comparison in his book on the transcendent unity of religions (Italian ed. Bari, 1949 pp. 131 ff.) seems then to go too far when he compares Muhammad to the Virgin Mary (both were the vehicles of the Word of God, i.e. Qur'ān and Christ, p. 146). Apart from these rather far-fetched metaphysical deductions, it would be perhaps safer to compare typologically Muḥammad to one of the Christian evangelists or to St. Paul.

87) *Ghuluww*, exaggeration, means, in Islam, extreme concentration of the numinosum in one person. Maṣṣūr al-Hallāj, the mystic martyr of Islam (crucified in Baghdad in 922) seems one of the very few in Islam to have supported the idea of *ḥulūl* (incarnation).

88) It is interesting that Islamic languages have no proper words to translate our "dogma". And the ways to which they resort to "give the idea" are quite instructive: *Auhām*, personal imaginations; *ẓunūn*, thoughts; *khurāfāt*, untrue legends (also applied to archaic mythology). Dogma is for them something coming "from below", personal fancy or archaic myth.

89) This feeling, in a Christian, remains even after knowing the Muslim concept of successive revelation, because, for him, Truth is a Person, not "soluble" into history.

theists of the same type would be slightly easier, perhaps (and in fact conversions have been and are comparatively more frequent): that between a Jew and a Muslim might center around the more or less great philological reliability of the received texts of the Holy Books, or the greater or lesser “modernity” of the respective Laws (both religions having the idea of successive revelations etc.); that between a Christian and a Bahā’ī might concentrate on the possibility of a plurality of historical personal manifestations of the only Logos, the eternal Christ, or on the defence of the concept of manifestation (*maẓhar*) versus incarnation (*ḥulūl*)<sup>90</sup>). And finally typological conversions in the field of the same culture (Jews to Christianity, Muslims to Bahā’ism) seem frequent especially in the historical period of the enthusiastic birth of the secondary religion, decreasing as the concrete historical and cultural situation changes with time<sup>91</sup>). The mistaken attribution of all what is positive in modern technical civilization to Christianity created a further “reason” (quite extra-religious but consciously felt as religious), for conversions in the “difficult” directions. I hope not too seem disrespectful of the different religious sensibilities, if I say that the few converts from Islam to Christianity (and from Judaism to Christianity) look more like converts to a new and more modern form of culture and civilization than to a better religion, identifying social and technical progress with Christianity (whereas, in my opinion, this “modernity” is the common fruit of the monotheistic outlook)<sup>92</sup>), whereas some of

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90) See note 36.

91) The mass conversions to Bahā’ism mentioned in note 78 show that this religion (founded at the end of past century) is still in its juvenile stage.

92) I tried to emphasize this point with more details in my article: *La tradizione arabo-islamica nella cultura europa* in “Humanitas”, XII, 1957, pp. 809 ff. A fruit of Monotheism is, of course, rather than “science”, “history”, “democracy” etc. in the modern sense, a form of palaeo-science, palaeo-history, palaeo-democracy. The really modern forms seem to be the result of an attempt to go further on this line leaving God out. The fact that “modern culture” was born in a “secondary monotheistic” milieu is not due to a direct influence of Christianity as religion, but rather to the greater possibility to “leave God out” in a secondary monotheism, where the punctual and continuous interference of God in the world’s affairs (Islam) is transformed into a single divine act (Incarnation/Redemption) and God himself has “lost” a part of His sacrality in favour of His only begotten human Son. This could be a typological explanation of the problem, always put again, and never satisfactorily solved, by Muslim modernism, of how and why modern culture,

the converts from Christianity to Islam seem, interpreting in the opposite direction the same historico-cultural mistake, to seek refuge in Islam *from* a too technical civilization!<sup>93</sup>). Conversions *from* monotheisms seem almost all entangled in misunderstandings and unclearness. In fact, starting from the pure Monotheistic point of view, progress is not a progress towards abstract religious Truth (as in a premonotheistically based philosophy), and only two logical ways are open in front of a "Monotheist" that does feel the impulse of conversion to something: that of modern atheism (historical progressism) or that of the possibility of further "modern" personal revelations of the only absolute Lord.

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that should have been born in Islam, a more "recent" and modern religion, was instead created in a Christian atmosphere. It is however a proposed solution that will satisfy surely neither Muslims nor Christians!

93) One typical example is perhaps that of R. Guénon, one of the most radical assertors of the supreme and permanent validity of the "traditional" and "archaic" culture, for whom modern Chemistry and Astronomy are degenerations of Alchemy and Astrology, an admirer of Hindu Vedantism etc. who died as a Sufi Muslim in Egypt some years ago! A Bibliography on the subjects treated here would cover the entire subject of "Missiology". Many useful sources of factual materials can be found in E. BENZ u. Minoru NAMBARA, *Das Christentum und die nicht-christlichen Hochreligionen... Eine internationale Bibliographie*, Leiden 1960 (Especially under the headings "Missionswissenschaft", "Religionspädagogik" etc.).

# VEHICULA RELIGIOSA WAGEN IN MYTHOS, RITUS, KULTUS UND MYSTERIUM

VON

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Verschiedentlich wird die Behauptung aufgestellt, die Wagenidee sei im Rahmen eines religiösen Kultes oder rituellen Dienstes entstanden <sup>1)</sup>. Priester hätten als erste Scheiben auf Achsen gesteckt, um darauf ihre Götterbilder oder heiligen Geräte herumzufahren und dadurch die Bewegung der Gestirne nachzuahmen.

In gewisser Beziehung zu diesen Gedanken steht die Verlegung der Wagenerfindung in die Kinderstube, wobei angenommen wird, daß eine Mutter den ersten Wagen als Spielzeug für ihre Kinder hergestellt hat <sup>2)</sup>.

Bei oberflächlicher Betrachtung scheint es, als ob archäologische Funde diese Ansichten bestätigen: Der überwiegende Teil ältester Wagenhinweise stammt aus Grabfunden, wobei einige als Modell ausgeführt sind, sodaß die Entscheidung, ob es sich um ein Spielzeug handelt, vielfach schwierig erscheint.

Bei sorgfältigerer Prüfung hingegen ergibt sich, daß der überwiegende Teil dieser Grabbeigabe-Wagen echte Gebrauchswagen oder getreue Kopien wirklicher Fahrzeuge sind. Die daneben ebenfalls vertretenen *vehicula religiosa*, über die in den nachfolgenden Ausführungen berichtet werden wird, treten nachweislich etwa 1000 Jahre später, als die Profanwagen in den Gräbern auf <sup>3)</sup>.

Der Wagen ist also weder von Priestern, noch von Müttern in der Kinderstube erfunden worden, sondern von arbeitenden Menschen, die

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1) E. Hahn. Das Alter der wirtschaftlichen Kultur der Menschheit. Winter. Heidelberg 1905. Seite 123.

2) Forrestier. La rue. Paris 1900. Seite 124.

3) O. Mahr. Geschichte des Wagenrades. Technikgeschichte. Bd. 23. Jahrgang 1934. Seite 51.

eine technische Aufgabe zu lösen hatten. Es zeigt sich, daß dieses Phänomen weder dem Zufall, noch dem genialen Einfall zu verdanken ist, sondern aus Transportbedürfnissen und als Kombination derzeit bereits bekannter anderer Errungenschaften erklärt werden muß 4).

Wodurch unterscheiden sich die *vehicula religiosa* und die Profanwagen z.B. in den Grabfunden?

Die Fahrzeuge mit eindeutigen Beziehungen zu Mythos, Ritus, Kultus und Mysterium fallen durch ihre absonderliche Gestaltung aus dem Rahmen der Profanwagen: Durch überdimensionalen Oberbau des Wagenkastens; durch geisterhafte Gespanne; durch phantastische Kombination mit anderen Fahrzeugen, wie mit dem Boot; durch technisch ungewöhnliche Anordnung und Anzahl der Räder, wie z.B. drei Räder auf einer Achse; durch technisch nicht vertretbare Verbindungen von organischen und mechanischen Teilen, Räder mit Vogelschwingen usw.

Wie kommt es zu diesen sonderbaren Gestaltungen? Es ist eine allgemein zu beobachtende Erscheinung, daß erstaunliche Erfindungen und Neuerungen in alten Zeiten alsbald dazu benutzt werden, mit überirdischen oder übersinnlichen Mächten in Verbindung zu treten. Man vergleiche z.B. die Indienstellung des Feuers für die Ernährung und Erwärmung des Menschen mit dem alsbald in Erscheinung tretenden Opferfeuer auf den Altären; oder den Fortschritt des Häuserbaues mit der beginnenden Errichtung von Tempeln! Die Anwendung der besten und stärksten menschlichen Erfindungen zur Kontaktaufnahme mit übersinnlichen Welten ist ein Beweis dafür, daß sich der frühe Mensch von den Naturgewalten bedrängt nach einem Mittler umsieht.

In den Mythen spielt vielfach der Wagen die Rolle dieses Mittlers, und es entstehen auf diese Weise die ersten *vehicula religiosa*. Sie stammen zunächst aus dem Orient.

Ein Siegelabdruck mit der Darstellung des Sonnengottes Schamasch mit Wagen und Boot aus dem dritten Jahrtausend v.u.Z. wurde in Schicht I von Ur gefunden. Der Wagen ist das Fahrzeug des Gottes für den Tag, während das Boot als nächtliches Fahrzeug dient und dem in den Wolken „schwimmenden“ Mond nachgebildet ist 5). Im Orient fehlen bzw. sind nicht auf uns gekommen jene Wagen, welche

4) A. G. Haudricourt. Contribution à la géographie et à l'ethnologie de la voiture. La Revue de Géographie humaine et d'Ethnologie. Sommaire du Nr. 1. Paris 1948. Seite 58.

5) F. Hančar. Das Pferd in prähistorischer und früher historischer Zeit. Herald. München-Wien 1956. Seite 425. Tafel XXa. Tafel XXIVb.

Sonnen — bzw. Mondscheiben als unmittelbare Nachbildung der Gestirne fahren, wie sie bei den nordischen Mythoswagen in den älteren Zeiten vielfach üblich sind.

Ungefähr gleichaltrig mit dem Schamasch — Wagen ist das mythische Fahrzeug auf einem Tongefäß aus dem Donjon — Friedhof in Susa. Ein turmartiger Aufbau über dem Hinterwagen ermöglicht das Übersteigen einer Gottheit oder eines Heroen unmittelbar von der Spitze eines Zikkurat in das Fahrzeug, das mit gezahnten Rädern und mit bogenförmiger Deichsel ausgestattet ist. Zahnräder und Bogen-deichsel sollen an die Sterne und an das Gestirnbild des großen Bären erinnern.

Zwei weitere Darstellungen mythischer Wagen auf Siegelzylindern stammen aus der Akkad-Periode von Ur: bei dem ersten ist ein vier-rädriger Wagen mit Fabeltieren bespannt und wird von einer Gottheit gelenkt <sup>6)</sup>, beim zweiten ist ein Gott mit dem Blitz als Peitsche in der Hand auf einem zweirädrigen Wagen dargestellt, der mit einer Bogen-deichsel ausgestattet ist und von Fabeltieren gezogen wird. Selbst in kleinen Zügen erkennt man die Einheitlichkeit und Zusammengehörigkeit solcher Darstellungen <sup>7)</sup>.

In den Mythen der indoarischen Völkergruppe sind Wagen eine relativ häufige Erscheinung. Viele Heroen und Gottheiten sind direkt als Wagenspezialisten zu bezeichnen. Insbesondere gilt dieses vom indo-iranischen Zweig, bei dem auch die ältesten Wagenmythen nachgewiesen werden können. In ihren heiligen Büchern erscheinen die Hauptgötter als Wagenfahrer. Wenn auch beispielsweise aus den Wagenbeschreibungen des Indrafahrzeuges in der Rig-Veda für unsere Zwecke weniger zu entnehmen ist, da es sich um derart realistische Schilderungen handelt, daß danach eine maßgerechte Rekonstruktion des vedischen Streitwagens möglich wurde <sup>8)</sup>, so ergeben doch die Schilderungen anderer Fahrzeuge von Nebengöttern um so interessantere Züge. Der Wagen der Asvin z.B. hat drei Räder, ist dreitalig und mit drei brüderlichen Sitzen ausgestattet <sup>9)</sup>. Zu beachten ist hierbei, daß die

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6) A. Salonen. Die Landfahrzeuge des alten Mesopotamien. Suomalaisen Tiedakatemia Toimituksia. Ser. B Tom. 72,3. Helsinki 1951. Tafel VII, 2.

7) Wie 6) Tafel XVI, 1.

8) S. Piggott. Prehistoric India. Pelican Books A 205. Harmondsworth-Middlesex 1950. p. 279-281. Fig. 32.

9) Rig-Veda. I 34,9; 47,2; II 18,2; 157,3; 183,1; VIII 85,8; X 41,1; 85,14 usw.



drei Räder auf einer Achse laufen, wie verschiedene andere Rig-Veda-Stellen erkennen lassen <sup>10)</sup>). Auch finden die dreirädrigen nordischen Vogelwagen auf diese Weise ihre zwanglose Erklärung: der dreirädrige Wagen ist uraltes indoarisches Mythengut!

Auch beim Vorspann dieser Fahrzeuge der Nebengötter kann man viele interessante und aufschlußreiche Züge beobachten: So ist der Wagen der Marut mit Antilopen bespannt <sup>11)</sup>). Es handelt sich nicht etwa um antilopenfarbige Rosse, sondern um wirkliche Antilopen, wie eine weitere Stelle ausdrücklich bestätigt <sup>12)</sup>). Pusan, ein unter die Götter versetzter fahrender Sänger und Dichter, fährt mit Ziegenböcken, statt mit Rossen <sup>13)</sup>! Es ist denkbar, daß bei diesem mythischen Wagen der Erstgebrauch von Ziegen oder Böcken zum Wagenvorspann angedeutet ist. Man vergleiche auch den kretischen Zauberwagen mit Ziegen davor und Bocksgespanne germanischer Götter!

In der Awesta ist der Lichtgott Mithra ebenfalls Besitzer eines Wagens. Er löst sich immer mehr von seiner ursprünglichen Rolle als Verkörperer einer Naturgewalt, behält jedoch seinen Wagen auch in seiner neuen Gestalt als Erlösergott bei. Bereits in den Yaschts der Awesta steht er über der Sonne, die eines seiner Wagenräder ist <sup>14)</sup>). Und in ähnlicher Weise, wie der mythische Mithra-Wagen der Awesta sich zum kultischen Himmelsfahrzeug des Mithras einer späteren Zeit wandelt, so verkörpern sich die Zauberwagen in der Rig-Veda zu den Kultfahrzeugen des Surya, Tschandra oder Soma in den spätvedischen Kultwagen, die an anderer Stelle behandelt werden.

Das soeben erwähnte kretische Ziegengespann auf einem Siegel des 15. Jahrhunderts v.u.Z. aus Knossos leitet zu den mythischen Wagen im Mittelmeerraum über <sup>15)</sup>). Die einzige Andeutung auf den mythischen Charakter ist hier das Gespann.

Auf einem etwas jüngeren kyprisch-mykenischen Vasenbild aus Enkomi <sup>16)</sup> liegt das Gespenstische nicht im Gespann, sondern in der Ge-

10) Wie 9) I 164,2 und 48.

11) Wie 9) I 170,6.

12) Wie 9) V 55,6.

13) Wie 9) VI 55,4; X 26,8 und 9.

14) H. Lommel. Die Yaschts der Awesta. Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht. Göttingen 1927. Seite 64.

15) V. G. Childe. *Wheeled Vehicles. History of Technology* by Ch. Singer and E. John. Vol. I. Clarendon Press. Oxford 1955. Page 729.

16) E. v. Mercklin. *Der Rennwagen in Griechenland*. Radelli und Hille. Leipzig 1909. Taf. 1. Fig. 10.

staltung der Wagenfahrer: Zwei Gestalten mit Entenschnäbeln im Gesicht. Götter mit Entenschnäbeln werden auch andererseits auf mythischen Wagen dargestellt, so z.B. auf einer Gürtelschnalle von Akhtala in Kleinasien und auf dem sogen. Apollonwagen von Dupljaja auf dem Balkan.

Die homerischen Epen kennen eine ganze Reihe von Götter — und Heroenwagen <sup>17)</sup>. Der eigentliche Götterwagen, z.B. der Streitwagen der Hera, ist als eine Art Ganzmetallfahrzeug zu bezeichnen <sup>18)</sup>. Die streitbare Göttermutter greift mit seiner Hilfe persönlich in den Kampf um Troja ein. Er wird wie folgt geschildert <sup>19)</sup>: Erzene achtspeichige Räder, die auf einer eisernen Achse laufen. Die Achtspeichigkeit kennzeichnet einen gewissen orientalischen Einfluß, da die griechischen Streitwagen des Mutterlandes bis zuletzt am vierspeichigen Radkreuz festhalten. Der Wagenkasten wird von gold — und silberbeschlagenen Riemen gehalten, ist aber nicht an den Riemen aufgehängt, wie manche den Text falsch ausgelegt haben <sup>20)</sup>.

Dagegen sind die Heroenwagen nur aus festem Eichenholz, wie die des Diomedes <sup>21)</sup>, des Hektor und des Achilles. Ihre ganze Mythenhaftigkeit besteht im wesentlichen darin, daß sie die mythischen Helden an den Ort des Zweikampfes fahren <sup>22)</sup>.

Wahrscheinlich schon aus der Zeit nach der dorischen Einwanderung stammt der Mythos vom Schwanenwagen des Apollo. Im heroischen Zeitalter sind Erde und Himmel noch nicht scharf voneinander getrennt, sind Menschen und Götter nicht nur genealogisch miteinander verknüpft, macht man sich keinerlei besondere Gedanken, wie die mythischen Wagen technisch auszugestalten sind, um jene beiden Welten miteinander zu verbinden. Anders in der geschichtlichen Periode. Die Wagenmythen werden weiter ausgesponnen, jedoch sucht man die Transporttechnik mit darzustellen. Der Wagen Apolls besteht aus mehreren miteinander verbundenen Schwänen, zwischen denen der Gott seinen Platz hat.

Der große lesbische Lyriker Alkaios hat im 6. Jahrhundert v.u.Z.

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17) K. H. F. Grashoff. Der homerische Wagen. Düsseldorf Gymnasialprogramm 1842. Seite 10 ff.

18) Homer. Ilias E 727.

19) I. U. Faesi. Erklärungen zu Homers Ilias. Weideman. Leipzig 1851 I Bd.

20) F. M. Feldhaus. Technik der Vorzeit. Berlin-Leipzig 1914. Seite 1254.

21) Wie 18. E 838.

22) W. Reichel. Homerische Waffen. Hölder. Wien 1901. Seite 120.

diese Konstruktion als erster wie folgt geschildert <sup>23)</sup>: „Schwäne waren dieser Wagen“, und in seine Fußstapfen treten viele spätere Poeten, wie Aristophanes in der Komödie „Die Vögel“ <sup>24)</sup>, Ovid in seinen „Metamorphosen“ <sup>25)</sup>, und Horaz in seinen Liedern <sup>26)</sup>.

Der Ursprung aller dieser Schwanengefährte scheint der große Alkäus zu sein. Aus erhalten gebliebenen Bruchstücken eines Pääns von ihm, der vermutlich zu den Theophanien in Delphi gesungen wurde, geht hervor, daß Zeus den neugeborenen Apollo auf jenem Schwanenwagen nach Delphi entsenden will, damit er den Griechen Recht und Gesetz verkünde. Apollo aber kehrt zunächst im Lande der Hyperboräer ein und läßt sich zur Frühlingszeit von delphischen Chören gerufen, nach Delphi tragen. Vogelgesang begrüßt ihn, Kastalia und Kephissos treten vor Freude über ihre Ufer, wenn er seinen Einzug hält <sup>27)</sup>.

Ein in Dupljaja in der Nähe des heutigen Belgrad gefundener Modellwagen aus Ton stellt nach der Meinung von Fachkennern <sup>28)</sup> die Verbindung zwischen griechisch-apollonischen Schwanenwagen und mitteleuropäischen mythischen Vogelwagen her. Für diese Idee sprechen viele überraschende Parallelen: Der Wagenkasten von Dupljaja besteht in der Tat wie im Pään des Alkäus aus zwei Schwänen. Um das Modell beweglich zu machen, sind hinten zwei vierspeichige Räder auf einer festen Achse drehbar gelagert, während sich das dritte unterhalb der beiden Schwanenköpfe dreht. Im Wagen steht eine mythische Figur auf einem in den Wagenboden eingeritzten heiligen Sonnenzeichen, das Gesicht läuft in einem Etenschnabel aus! So verwunderlich dieser Zug gerade an einer für Apoll erklärten Darstellung auf den ersten Blick auch sein mag, man vergleiche die mit Vogel-schnäbeln ausgestatteten Götterdarstellungen auf den Wagen von Enkomi und Akhtala!

23) A. Matthiae. *Alcaeae Mytilenaeae Reliquiae*. Leipzig 1827. Seite 23.

24) Aristophanes. *Komödien* 2 Bd. „Die Vögel“. Hendel. Naunhof-Leipzig 1933. Seite 268.

25) Ovids *Metamorphosen* X, 708/9. Teubner. Leipzig 1938. Seite 219.

26) Horaz. *Horatius F. Quintus. Opera omnia. Liber IV*, 10. Heimeran. München 1953. Seite 93.

27) W. H. Roscher. *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*. Bd. I. Teubner. Leipzig 1884-1937. Seite 426.

28) E. Sprockhoff. *Nordische Bronzezeit und frühes Griechentum*. Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums Mainz. 1. Jahrgang 1954. Seite 28-110.

Das Wagenmodel von Dupljaja ist dreirädrig, und es ist bereits auf die dreirädrigen mythischen Wagen der Rig-Veda hingewiesen, auf die vielen dreirädrigen nordischen Vogelwagen Bezug genommen worden. Auch dem klassischen Altertum scheinen dreirädrige Wagengebilde nicht unbekannt gewesen zu sein. In der Ilias stattet Hephästos von ihm gefertigte Dreifußgefäße mit Rädern aus<sup>29)</sup>; und in Italien aufgefundenen dreieckige sogen. Plattenwagen sind mit Füßen ausgestattet, durch deren Enden an tangentialen Achsstummeln dreimal je zwei kleine vierspeichige Rädchenpaare gehalten werden<sup>30)</sup>. Da keinerlei Drehgelenke vorgesehen sind, muß man annehmen, daß beim Transport jeweils zwei Räderpaare hochgehoben wurden. So stimmt es zwar nicht ganz, was früher behauptet wurde<sup>31)</sup> „... und überdies ist ein dreirädriger Wagen dieser Art in Alteuropa und wohl überhaupt im Altertum unerhört“; aber solche Wagen scheinen doch mehr mythischen Charakter gehabt zu haben, denn als technische Gebrauchswagen findet man sie nicht.

Je mehr die Mythologie im griechischen Klassizismus in Allegorie übergeht, desto deutlicher wird in den Wagendarstellungen mythischer Art die Diskrepanz zwischen vollendeter Darstellungstechnik und offensichtlichem grobem Verstoß gegen die physikalischen Gegebenheiten, wie an diversen Helios-Quadrigen der spätklassischen Zeit nachgewiesen werden kann<sup>32)</sup>. Ohne Zweifel kennt der Zeichner die Situation bei der windschnellen Fahrt der Rennwagen aus eigener Anschauung. Die Stellung des Rennfahrers, nämlich des Helios in diesem Falle, ist bemerkenswert sachgemäß und realistisch dargestellt. Jedoch die Pferde behindern einander beim Flügelschlag, was gerade in dem gewählten Augenblick des Ablösens von der Fahrbahn besonders auffällt. Das Flügelroß ist überhaupt beim Anatom ein wenig beliebtes Thema: Es fehlen die Muskelpakete zum Antrieb des Flugapparates, die sich auf der Zeichnung ohne Zweifel in den äußeren hautüberzogenen Konturen bemerkbar machen müßten.

Fast noch schlimmer sind die Darstellungen mythischer Wagen, bei

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29) J. H. Voss. Deutsche Übersetzung der Ilias. Askania. Berlin 1923. XVIII, 373-376.

30) I. Undset. Antike Wagengebilde. Zeitschrift für Ethnologie 22. Band 1890 Asher u. Co. Berlin 1890. Seite 61. Fig. 10.

31) Seger. Altschlesien Band 3 Heft 2. Hirt. Breslau 1931. Seite 203.

32) R. Forrer. Reallexikon. Spemann. Berlin und Stuttgart 1918. Seite 340. Fig. 259.

denen das Geisterhafte in geschmackloser Weise durch Kreuzung tierischer Organe mit technischen Maschinenelementen vorgetäuscht wird, wie z.B. an einem einachsigen Wagen, an dessen Speichen bzw. Achsenenden naturwidrig Riesenflügel angepappt sind. Es handelt sich um die Darstellung eines Fahrzeugs des Triptolemos, des Fruchtbarkeitsgottes, auf dem Skyphos des Hieron mit Beziehungen zu den Eleusischen Mysterien <sup>33</sup>).

Von den Römern werden die Darstellungen mythischer Wagen fast ausschließlich nach griechischem Muster geformt. Bei den Etruskern, die als einziges italisches Volk eigene Schöpfungen auf diesem Gebiet hervorgebracht haben, hängen die mythischen Wagen ausschließlich mit dem Begräbniszeremoniell zusammen, sodaß diese an anderer Stelle zu behandeln sind.

Dagegen sind bei den mittel- und nordeuropäischen mythischen Wagen die mannigfaltigsten Formen und Entwicklungen festzustellen. Hier kann an den Wagenbildern und Modellen ein Fortschritt in der mythologischen Auffassung unwiederleglich nachgewiesen werden: Zuerst erscheint die als Gottheit verehrte Naturgewalt als Scheibe, die auf einen Wagen gestellt ist. Das entspricht gewissermaßen der Entwicklungsstufe eins, der physischen Mythologie. Ein besonders eindrucksvolles Beispiel hierfür ist der Sonnenwagen von Trundholm <sup>34</sup>). Das in einem dänischen Moor gefundene Gerät aus der Bronzezeit besteht aus einer aufrecht stehenden Scheibe, die zusammen mit einem Pferd auf einem Drahtgestell montiert ist, das durch sechs vierspeichige Räder fahrbar gemacht worden ist. Die Scheibe steht auf den beiden Hinterrädern, die als der eigentliche Wagen zu gelten haben, während die vier Vorderräder lediglich als fahrbarer Untersatz der Pferdefigur zu betrachten sind. Für einen regulären Kultwagen ist dieser Wagen zu klein, vielmehr gilt er als Weihegabe und stellt ein bemerkenswertes mythologisches Denkmal dar. Auf der einen vergoldeten Seite der Scheibe sind Spiralsymbole angebracht, die auf die Sonne hinweisen, während die andere Scheibenseite in Bronze gehalten ist und zum Mond Beziehungen hat. Ähnliche Scheiben sind in Schweden, in Däne-

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33) M. P. Nilsson. Geschichte der griechischen Religion. I Band. Beck. München 1941. Seite 629. Tafel 43,1.

34) C. Clemen. Urgeschichte der Religion. II Band. Röhrscheid. Bonn 1933. Seite 32. Abbildung 72.

mark, in Dithmarschen, im Rheinland, in Irland und in England gefunden worden <sup>35)</sup>). Ideenverwandt mit den bronzenen Sonnenscheiben sind die mythologischen Darstellungen auf den skandinavischen Felsbildern der Bronzezeit. Dort kann man sogar das allmähliche Heranreifen der Sonnenwagenidee schrittweise verfolgen: auf den Zeichnungen von Kalleby, Backa und Lilla Arendal ist eine Scheibe dargestellt, die mittels langer Schnüre mit den Zugtieren verbunden ist; die Darstellung von Lilla Gerum zeigt die Scheibe schon auf einem Art Gestell ohne Räder, das vermutlich getragen wurde; in der Zeichnung von Brastad ist sie auf Stützen über vierspeichigen Rädern angeordnet; die Sonnenwagenidee ist ausgereift! <sup>36)</sup>

Auch der Übergang auf Stufe zwei der mythischen Wagen ist abzulesen: der erst auf den Scheiben aufgeritzte Symbolismus macht sich selbständig. Auf weiteren Zeichnungen aus Backa sitzen schon Vögel als Sonnensymbole auf der Deichsel <sup>37)</sup>). Die Scheibe ist eine halbe Etage tiefer gerutscht, steht fast zwischen den beiden Wagenrädern, sodaß der Eindruck eines dreirädrigen Wagens entsteht. Diese Eigentümlichkeit kehrt bei vielen ostdeutschen sogenannten Vogelwagen wieder, z.B. bei den Wagen von Frankfurt - Dossen, Ober - Kehle, Burg - Spreewald und Eiche - Golm; sie alle stammen aus dem mittleren Odergebiet. Die dreirädrigen Wagen der Rig-Veda wurden bereits erwähnt, und es kann auf eine altarisches Tradition des dreirädrigen mythischen Wagens geschlossen werden. Im Odergebiet treten allerdings auch zweirädrige Vogelwagen auf, wie die in Groß-Perschwitz Kreis Militsch und andernorts gefundenen Modellwagen beweisen <sup>38)</sup>). Aber allen gemeinsam sind die sogenannten Hallstadtvoegel, deren Köpfe nicht selten durch Stierhörner verunziert sind. Gerade dieser phantastische Schmuck ist aber ein deutlicher Hinweis auf den mythischen Charakter dieser kleinen Wagen.

Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, daß die ostdeutschen Vogelwagen weder

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35) H. Mötefindt, Der Wagen im nordischen Kulturkreis zur vor- und frühgeschichtlichen Zeit. Festschrift E. Hahn. Strecker u. Schröder. Stuttgart 1917. Seite 230.

36) Wie 34) Seite 33. Abbildung 74.

37) L. Baltzer. Schwedische Felsbilder von Göteborg bis Strönstad. Folkwang. Hagen i.W. 1919. Tafel 3.

38) R. Breddin. Zum Bronzewagen von Eiche-Golm. Festschrift Hofmann. Märkische Heimat. Sonderheft 2. 1961. Seite 36 und Abbildung 3.

im Kult, noch bei rituellen Handlungen gebraucht wurden, sondern mythisch verzierte häusliche Nuts- und Schmuckgegenstände waren. Man braucht dabei ja nicht gerade auf Deichselbeschläge zu verfallen, als was die Wägelchen von manchen erklärt wurden <sup>39)</sup>.

Auch aus dem Süden und Westen des bronzeseitlichen Europa haben wir Nachweise mythischer Wagen. Sie bezeichnen wichtige Verbindungslinien und Ausgangspunkte der kulturellen Entwicklung. So gilt beispielsweise der bereits erwähnte Wagen von Dupljaja auch als Hinweis uralter Zusammenhänge zwischen dem Ursprungsland der Dorer und ihrer späteren griechischen Heimat <sup>40)</sup>. Dieser kleine Modellwagen aus Ton stammt aus der Bronzeperiode IV und wurde in der Nähe des heutigen Belgrad gefunden. Da er von Schwänen gezogen wird, kann er als Fortführung der ostdeutschen Vogelwagen gelten; als Weiterentwicklung, weil auf ihm eine Figur als Vertreter oder Herr der Sonne steht, und zwar über einem in den Wagenboden eingeritzten Sonnensymbol, einem vierspeichigen Radkreuz. Er repräsentiert daher die Entwicklungsstufe drei der mythischen Wagen, die eine verpersönlichte Naturgewalt in Gestalt eines Götterbildes fahren und zumeist schon für den kultischen Dienst gebraucht werden; worüber nachfolgend weiter berichtet wird. Der Wagen von Dupljaja gehört wohl noch nicht zu den eigentlichen Kultwagen; ja, einige sehen in ihm eine Grabbeigabe, bei welcher der Tote bzw. sein Abbild auf dem Fahrzeug die Zügel führt <sup>41)</sup>. Über die Rolle des Wagens bei Begräbnissen wird auch noch gesondert referiert werden.

Abschließend kann über die Darstellungen von Göttern oder Götterbildern im Wagen gesagt werden, daß auch in Italien und Spanien Modellwagen gefunden wurden, die zu kultischen Zwecken kaum Verwendung fanden, also als mythische Fahrzeuge für den Hausgebrauch zu gelten haben. Der sogenannte Bronzewagen von Cortona ist eine etruskische Arbeit <sup>42)</sup>. Auf überlangen Achsen sitzen vier Vollräder. Die beiden Achsen werden durch zwei Langbäume zusammengehalten,

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39) Wie 31) Seite 204.

40) Wie 28) Seite 71.

41) Edith B. — Thomas. Archäologische Funde in Ungarn. Corvina. Budapest 1956, S. 118.

42) Zeitschrift für Ethnologie. 15. Band 1883. Asher. Berlin 1883. Seite 416, 417.

die in Schwanenköpfen mit Stiergehörn auslaufen. Hinten steht die Figur des Sonnengottes, vorne eine Kuh als Symbol des Mondes.

Statt eines Gottes trägt der Plattenwagen von Merida aus Spanien einen Heroen und stammt aus der Zeit von etwa 500 v.u.Z. 43). Dargestellt wird auf der Platte eine Jagdszene mit Meleager, dem Argonauten und Jäger des griechischen Altertums, wie er mit Roß und Hund einen Eber verfolgt. Unter der Platte sind vier sechsspeichige Räder angebracht, hinten hängen an Ketten kleine Glöckchen, was unter Umständen auch auf kultischen Gebrauch deuten könnte. Das formvollendete Gerät ist keltiberische Arbeit 44).

Während der mythische Wagen im wesentlichen als fahrbarer Untersatz für Götter- und Heroengestalten zu dienen hat, ist der rituelle Wagen für zweierlei Aufgaben vorgesehen: Transport der Leiche zum Begräbnis und Beförderung des unsterblichen Teiles des Verstorbenen in das Jenseits. Eine Zweiteilung dieser Art kann schon sehr frühzeitig beobachtet werden. In den Keilschrifttexten des hethitischen Totenrituals, das in den Trümmerstätten von Osmakayasi gefunden wurde, wird diese Zweiteilung noch ganz primitiv dargestellt: Auf einem schweren vierrädrigen Lastwagen wird zuerst die Leiche zum Scheiterhaufen gefahren; sodann wird ein Bild des Toten auf einem „leichten Sitzwagen“ zum Ort des Begräbnisses gebracht 45).

Die Transsubstantation durch das Feuer und die Rolle des Wagens dabei wird auch bei chinesischen Begräbnisbräuchen ersichtlich: Der Tote wird in einem Auto aus Pappe verbrannt, das zwar zum Fahren in der ursprünglichen Gestalt ungeeignet ist, aber nach dem Feuerdurchgang als geeignetes Seelenfahrzeug angesehen wird.

Aus dem 14. Jahrhundert v.u.Z. stammt eine doppelte Darstellung von Wagen auf einem Sarkophag aus Hagia Triada in Kreta. Auf dem ersten Bild fährt das tote Ehepaar auf einem normalen pferdegezogenen Fahrzeug in das Totenreich hinab; die Seelen kehren auf einem Gespensterfahrzeug mit altertümlichen Speichen und von Greifen gezogen zur Erde zurück 46). Diese Darstellung der Totenwiederkehr

43) J. Wiesner. *Fahren und Reiten in Alteuropa und im Alten Orient*. Der Alte Orient. Band 38. Heft 2-4. Hinrichs. Leipzig 1939. Seite 55 und Tafel V, 2.

44) J. Moreau. *Die Welt der Kelten*. Kilpper. Stuttgart 1958. Seite 253 Tafel T 46.

45) Bittel-Naumann. *Boghazköy-Hattusa. II*. Mann. Berlin 1958. Seite 81 u. 82.

46) F. Matz. *Kreta, Mykene, Troja*. Kilpper. Stuttgart 1956. Seite 62/63, Seite 268 und Tafel 47.



haben die Etrusker und Römer übernommen: Auf einem Sarkophag aus Vulci beispielsweise ist eine ähnliche Wagenszene dargestellt, wobei die Räder merkwürdig gebogene Speichen aufweisen <sup>47)</sup>).

In der Bretagne endlich geht Ancou mit seinem Seelenwagen um: Er holt die Seelen der Verstorbenen in einem Karren, vor dem zwei Pferde langgespannt angeschirrt sind, ein mageres und ein kräftiges. Ancou steht aufrecht im Wagen, während seine zwei Begleiter die Schlagbäume heben und die Haustüren aufsprengen <sup>48)</sup>).

Der Totenwagen in seiner Erscheinungsform als Transportmittel der sterblichen Überreste nimmt sehr häufig Miniaturform an, wenn er zugleich als letzte Aufbewahrung für die Asche vorgesehen ist. Diese Urnenwagen treten im Altertum selbstverständlich erst nach dem Aufkommen der Brandbestattung auf. Der in Budakalaász in Ungarn gefundene Urnenwagen aus gebranntem Ton stammt aus dem Jahr 1800 v.u.Z. und gilt zugleich als einer der frühesten Wagenhinweise dieses Gebietes überhaupt. Aus den Fundumständen folgert man, daß der Wagen in einem symbolischen Grab für einen fern der Heimat Verstorbenen gelegen hat. Aus der realistischen Wagendarstellung sind wertvolle Rückschlüsse auf die damalige Spannweise, Transportentwicklung und Kultur zu ziehen. Andere derartige Fahrzeuge sind fast reine Urnen auf einem Rädergestell. Gleichfalls aus Ungarn stammt der Fund von Kánya, der auf das 7. Jahrhundert v.u.Z. datiert wird, und weiter nichts, als eine Urne auf Rädern ist.

Nach dem Vorausgegangenen dürfte klar sein, woher das Transportmotiv bei diesen Urnenwagen stammt: es handelt sich um die Reise in die Unterwelt, um die Gleichsetzung des Urnenwagens mit dem Totenfahrzeug. Unter diesem Aspekt ist der Gedanke durchaus nicht von der Hand zu weisen, daß vielleicht sogar solche Wagen, wie der in Palaikastro auf Kreta gefundene Kastenwagen in Modellform, sowie das bekannte Modellfahrzeug aus Judenburg-Strettweg in Ungarn ursprünglich nichts anderes, als Urnenwagen waren <sup>49)</sup>! Es soll auch nicht verschwiegen werden, daß z.B. der Wagen von Strettweg als Sonnenwagen, ja sogar als Tafelaufsatz für reiche Häuser angesehen

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47) L. Bandi. *Die Welt der Etrusker*, Kilpper. Stuttgart 1960. Seite 295 u. Tafel T100.

48) Wie 35) Seite 245 und 246.

49) Wie 41) Seite 78.

wird <sup>50)</sup>. Die Verwendung als Tafelaufsatz folgert man wohl aus der Jagdszene, die auf der Wagensplattform dargestellt ist. Aber aus ihrer Mitte ragt eine hohe Gestalt heraus, die auf ihrem Kopfe ein Gefäß trägt; ganz ähnlich ist die Konstruktion eines Plattenwagens aus Vulci in Etrurien, nur das hier die Jagdszene fehlt. Die urnentragende Figur läßt es in beiden Fällen vermuten, daß hier eine Verwendung im Begräbnisritus vorliegt <sup>51)</sup>.

Zu den Urnenwagen kann man auch noch die aus Milavec in Böhmen und aus Szászwárosszék in Siebenbürgen stammenden Modellfahrzeuge zählen: auch sie haben eine zentrale Urne oder einen Kessel als Aufsatz, der auf vier gespeichten Rädern steht. Teilweise sind sie auch mit Hallstattvögeln ausgeschmückt, sodaß eine Verbindung mit den ostdeutschen Sonnenwagen zu bestehen scheint <sup>52)</sup>.

Nicht nur die Urnenwagen, sondern auch die Totenfahrzeuge überhaupt nehmen die seltsamsten Formen an. Im alten Ägypten beispielsweise stellt eine der ältesten erhaltenen Fahrzeug-Abbildungen einen vierrädrigen Sargwagen aus der Zeit der 13. Dynastie dar. Er hat Scheibenräder, die in Ägypten vorher nur noch in der 6. Dynastie vorkommen <sup>53)</sup>. Der Sargwagen hat folgenden Aufbau: unter einer Bedachung steht der Sarg auf einem Boot, das seinerseits auf die Plattform eines länglichen vierrädrigen Karrens aufgesetzt ist <sup>54)</sup>.

Diese Kombination kommt wie folgt zustande: das traditionelle mythische Sargtransportmittel ist das Boot, auch anderwärts. Erwähnt sei die altgriechische Sitte, dem Toten eine Münze als Fährlohn für Charon in den Mund zu legen; und in den nordischen Königsgräbern sind sehr häufig Wagen und Boot beigegeben, sodaß ähnliche Überlegungen bezüglich der Todesreise angestellt wurden, wie sie zu der ägyptischen Sargboot-Kombination führen. Auch bestand im Nillande die Sitte, vor dem Leichenzug Wasser auf die Erde zu sprängen, ein Hinweis auf das ursprüngliche Element des Leichentransportmittels.

Andere Bräuche bestanden bei der Beerdigung der skythischen Könige, wie sie Herodot überliefert und wie sie durch archäologische Funde

50) Wie 34) Erläuterungen zu Bild 112.

51) Wie 30) Seite 72 Fig. 19.

52) Wie 35) Seite 233.

53) Helck-Otto. Kleines Wörterbuch der Ägyptologie. Harassowitz. Wiesbaden 1956. Seite 400 ff.

54) A. Wiedemann. Das alte Ägypten, Winter. Heidelberg 1920. Seite 208. Abbildung 36.

bestätigt wurden <sup>55)</sup>). Hierbei spielt ein gewaltiger Leichenwagen eine große Rolle, auf den der Tote nach der Einbalsamierung durch alle Landesteile des Reiches gefahren wurde. Der Wagen war mit vielen Pferden bespannt und trug eine baldachinartige Bedachung. Voran schritten Männer mit Standarten und Rasseln, hinter dem Wagen ging der lange Zug der Totgeweihten, die mit begraben werden sollten. Wilde Klagerufe und ekstatische Schreie bildeten die Begleitung zu dem Geräassel der Dämonenvertreiber. Die Beisetzung erfolgte dann in einem Hügelgrab, das mit einem Kreis erschlagener Diener auf gepfälten Rossen zum Schutz vor bösen Geistern umgeben wurde.

Die eindrucksvolle Schilderung dieses königlichen Kondukts scheint typenbildend auf spätere Zeiten gewirkt zu haben. Spuren dieses Aufzuges glaubt man auf Darstellungen des Leichenzuges Alexanders des Großen und auf den Dipylon-Vasenbildern wiederzuerkennen. Auf einer solchen Dipylon-Vase ist z.B. ein zweispänniger vierrädriger Leichenwagen dargestellt. Der Tote ist hoch über der Wagenplatte auf einem mannshohen Katafalk allen sichtbar aufgebahrt, Swastiken als Feuerzeichen weisen auf den Weg zum Scheiterhaufen hin. Eine Zeile tiefer sind zweirädrige Rennwagen dargestellt, welche offenbar zu Leichenspielen aufgefahren sind. Die Vase wurde auf dem Dipylonfriedhof in Athen gefunden und soll aus der Zeit des Perikles stammen <sup>56)</sup>).

Ein Beispiel aus der hellenistischen Zeit ist der Leichenwagen Alexanders des Großen. In ihm ist nicht nur die Größe des Mannes symbolisiert, sondern auch die Verschmelzung östlicher und westlicher Ideen angedeutet, deren Vereinigung eines der Ziele Alexanders gewesen ist. Der übermäßige Prunk weist auf östliche Begräbniszeremonien hin; Gesamtkonzeption und künstlerische Gestaltung sind hellenistisch. Schriftsteller des Altertums <sup>57)</sup> schildern eine Harmamaxa, deren vier sechsspeichige Räder nach persischer Bauart unter die Wagenplatte gezogen waren. Im Wagenkasten von der Form eines griechischen Säulentempels war der Sarg in einem Art „Gelenk“ aufgehängt, um ihn vor den Stößen und Erschütterungen der Fahrt zu schützen! Wir können feststellen, daß hier ein Zeugnis für die Frühانwendung der Aufhängung zur Stoßdämpfung vorliegt, wie sie später bei den bekann-

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55) S. Piggott. *Die Welt, aus der wir kommen*. Knauer. München-Zürich 1961. S. 310 ff.

56) Wie 32) Seite 180 und Tafel 50.

57) Diodor Siculus. Liber XVIII cap. 26.

ten ungarischen Kutschen vorkommt. An der Vorderfront des reich mit Figuren ausgeschmückten und vergoldeten Wagens waren vier Deichseln starr befestigt, an denen noch jeweils drei Vordeichseln an Ketten hingen, sodaß bei vier Mauleseln an jeder Deichsel die stattliche Zahl von 64 Zugtieren den Gesamtvorspann bildeten. Sie wurden von 16 Stallknechten vom Sattel aus gelenkt, während ein Stallmeister auf der Wagenrampe die Oberleitung hatte. So zog der Wagen wochenlang die Strecke von Babylon bis Alexandria, wo die Leiche von Ptolomäus feierlich beigesetzt wurde <sup>58)</sup>).

Auch aus dem nördlichen Europa kennen wir eine Reihe von archäologischen Hinweisen auf Totenwagen, bei denen aber im Gegensatz zu den durchgesprochenen griechischen Beispielen nicht mit Bestimmtheit behauptet werden kann, daß sie nur für den Begräbnisritus gebraucht wurden. Auf den sogen. Tongefäßzeichnungen von Ödenburg in Ungarn und Darslub in Pomerellen sind vierrädrige Tafelwagen mit den Resten von Toten darauf dargestellt. Zwei Pferde sind vorgespannt, die Räder sind vierspeichig. Die Verbindung zwischen Deichsel und Hinterachse zeigt eine sonderbare Form, deren Zweck noch nicht restlos geklärt ist <sup>59)</sup>).

Jünger, als die soeben genannten Beispiele aus der Bronzezeit sind zwei berühmte nordische Totenwagen, der Dejbjergwagen aus der Zeit 500 v.u.Z. stammend und in einem dänischen Moor gefunden, sowie der Osebergwagen aus dem Grabe der dänischen Königin Aase aus der Periode um 800 u.Z. Fest steht, daß es sich in beiden Fällen um königliche Prunkwagen handelt. Aus gewissen Anzeichen hat man schließen wollen, daß es sich um Spezialkonstruktionen für den Begräbnisritus handelt <sup>60)</sup> und <sup>61)</sup>). Ganz sicher ist das aber nicht.

In modernen Zeiten sind spezialisierte Totenwagen eine Selbstverständlichkeit. Die heutigen Leichenwagen unterteilt man in zwei Gruppen: Überführungswagen mit zumeist motorischem Antrieb, sowie Konduktfahrzeuge mit meistens tierischer oder menschlicher Antriebskraft. Von dem düsteren Prunk und der schwarzen Pracht früherer

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58) J. Ch. Ginzrot. Die Wagen und Fuhrwerke der Griechen und Römer und anderer alten Völker. München 1817 II Bd. Seite 91 und Tafel T L III.

59) Wie 34) Abbildung 110.

60) F. Adama van Scheltema. Der Osebergfund. Filser. Augsburg 1929. Tafel VI.

61) H. Petersen. Vognfundene i Dejbjerg Praestegaardsmore ved Ringkjøbing 1881 og 1883. Kobenhagen bei Reitzel 1888.

Totenwagen ist beim motorisierten Leichenwagen außer einem dunklen Anstrich und in den Festern eingezätzten Blumenornamenten nichts mehr übriggeblieben. Er ist mit Ventilationsanlage, Frontlenkung, Sitzen für die Sargträger und Sonderabteilen für eine Anzahl Leidtragender ausgestattet. Zuweilen werden die Wagendächer weiß gehalten, um den Anprall der Sonnenstrahlen zu mildern <sup>62</sup>). Nach dem Muster besonders Hamburger Bestattungswagen bemüht man sich jetzt vielfach um den elektrischen Antrieb, dessen Geräuscharmheit und Geruchlosigkeit für diese Zwecke sehr geeignet erscheint. Wegen des dem Elektromobil bisher anhaftenden Nachteils des relativ geringen Aktionsradius wird es aber überwiegend beim Kondukt eingesetzt. Hierfür hat man sogar noch in unserer Zeit der Motorisierung Transportwagen für Handbetrieb, aber mit Pneumatik, Kugellagerung und Bremsung für abschüssige Wege eingesetzt <sup>63</sup>).

Während unserem modernen Empfinden die Mitbeutzung des Totenwagens bei anderen Riten, z.B. als Hochzeitskutsche, völlig unmöglich erscheint, sind für weit zurückliegende Zeiten solche Kopplungen verschiedentlich nachzuweisen. Es handelt sich um die Hochzeitswagen hochgestellter Frauen, die auf dem als Mitgift in die Ehe gebrachten Prunkwagen auch beigelegt werden. Aus dem Altai der Skythenzeit hat sich z.B. ein hochinteressanter vierrädriger Wagen in einem fürstlichen Hügelgrab erhalten. Nach der Ansicht sowjetischer Archäologen handelt es sich um den Hochzeitswagen einer chinesischen Prinzessin, die einen Altaifürsten ehelichte. Ihr Wagen wurde dem gemeinsamen Grabe der Eheleute beigegeben und hat sich im Grundeis über die Jahrtausende erhalten <sup>64</sup>). Ferner wird von dem bereits erwähnten Wagen der norwegischen Königin Aase behauptet er sei zugleich der Hochzeitswagen von Aases Schwiegertochter, die mit ihr zusammen beerdigt ist, gewesen <sup>65</sup>).

Wenn der Totenwagen nicht in natura, sondern in Modellform beigegeben ist, kann es leicht zu widerspruchsvollen Ausdeutungen über den eigentlichen Zweck dieses Fahrzeuges kommen. So sehen z.B. viele

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62) Das kommunale Friedhofs- und Bestattungswesen. Nr. 19 der Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Kommunalwirtschaft Dresden. Berlin 1962.

63) Mitteilungen des Herrn Jahn, Verwaltung des Südfriedhofes Leipzig.

64) S. I. Rudenko. Die Kultur der Bevölkerung des mittleren Altai in der Skythenzeit. Akademie der Wissenschaften der UdSSR-Moskau-Leningrad 1960. Seite 236.

65) Wie 60) Seite 24.

in dem bereits mehrfach erwähnten Modellwagen von Dupljaja bei Belgrad ein Totenfahrzeug, auf welchem der Verstorbene in effigie im Wagenkorb steht und die Fahrt in die Unterwelt macht <sup>66)</sup>.

Es ergeben sich kulturhistorisch hochinteressante Entwicklungstendenzen bei diesen *vehicula religiosa*: Nachdem man an ein mehr unkörperliches, symbolisches Weiterleben des Dahingegangenen glauben gelernt hat, genügt als Beigabe auch der Modellwagen. Es bestehen da gewisse Ideenverbindungen mit den sogenannten Motivwagen, ebenfalls Modellfahrzeugen, die bestimmten Göttern nach einem persönlichen Erlebnis in Verbindung mit einer besonderen Bitte oder als Dank geweiht werden. Als Beispiel eines derartigen Fahrzeuges sei das Terracottawägelchen von Tanagra genannt <sup>67)</sup>. Es handelt sich um die naturgetreue Nachbildung eines helladischen Streitwagens mit Viergespann aus der Zeit der Schlacht von Tanagra im Jahr 457 v.u.Z. Athen wurde von den Spartanern geschlagen, und es ist anzunehmen, daß der Gräberfund eine Weihgabe für einen in der Schlacht gefallenen Kämpfer darstellt, der dadurch dem Schutze und der besonderen Aufmerksamkeit der beschenkten Gottheit empfohlen wird.

Eine Weiterentwicklung in dieser Richtung stellen die den Toten in Form von Zeichnungen mitgegebenen Fahrzeuge dar. Die Veranlassung fast aller dieser, für uns so wichtigen Dokumentationen ist weniger der Wunsch, etwas der Nachwelt zu überliefern, als vielmehr die inzwischen herangebildete Idee der symbolischen Totenbeigabe. Man braucht nicht mehr die Diener und Zugtiere zu erschlagen und die Wagen in natura oder im Modell dem Toten beizugeben; es genügt, alle diese Dinge zeichnerisch darzustellen. Man betrachte das Wagen-  
denkmal von Kivik aus Südschweden. Die in die Grabsteine geritzte Zeichnung aus der Periode um 1000 v.u.Z. stellt einen zweirädrigen vierspeichigen Wagen mit einem Lenker und Zügeln vorne auf der Deichsel stehend <sup>68)</sup> dar.

Es handelt sich da offenbar weder um Kampfspiele für den Verstorbenen, noch um einen Sonnenwagen, sondern der Wagen ist dem Toten als Fahrzeug in die Unterwelt symbolhaft zugeordnet!

Die bisher besprochenen rituellen Wagen gehören in vielen Beziehungen mit den sogenannten Kultfahrzeugen zusammen. Die Begriffe

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66) Wie 41) Seite 118.

67) Wie 16) Seite 43 und 44. Tafel 3 Abbildung 49.

68) Wie 34) I Band 1932 Seite 109 und II Bd. 1933 Seite 31 Abb. 69.

Ritus und Kultus gehen oft ineinander über. Wenn beispielsweise dem Verstorbenen göttliche Ehrungen erwiesen werden, erweitert sich der Begräbnisritus und wird zum Totenkult. Dann kann auch das Totenfahrgewerk als Träger des Göttlichen in einen regulären Kult eingebaut werden. Als Transportinstrument einer Gottheit wird der Wagen dann zum Kultgerät.

Ein Kultwagen als Träger des Göttlichen ist z.B. das von Tacitus beschriebene Fahrgewerk der germanischen Erdmutter Nerthus<sup>69)</sup>. Auf einer Insel steht ein gedeckter heiliger Wagen, der nur von Priestern berührt werden darf. Sobald diese die Anwesenheit der Göttin auf dem Wagen feststellen, werden Kühe vorgespannt und eine Rundreise durch die Gebiete der Ostseeküste gemacht, in denen die Nerthusverehrer wohnen. Während des Umzuges herrscht absoluter Burgfriede. An jedem berührten Ort wird der Göttin ein Fest gefeiert. Nach vollendetem Umzug müssen Sklaven den Wagen und angeblich auch die Göttin in einem heiligen See waschen, worauf sie ertränkt werden, damit das Geheimnis gewahrt bleibt.

Bereits im 17. Jahrhundert wurde die Insel und der See mit Rügen und dem sogen. Herthasee gleichgesetzt<sup>70)</sup>. Da die Göttin selbst gewaschen wurde, handelt es sich also um einen Wagen, auf dem die Göttin persönlich oder in Bildform anwesend war. In anderen Fällen ist der Wagen leer, das Göttliche ist nur symbolhaft anwesend und der Wagen selbst genießt göttliche Ehren, wie von einigen Kultdiensten Vorderasiens behauptet wird<sup>71)</sup>.

Die Bibel erwähnt Götterwagen der Sonne, die zu Zeiten des Abfalls vom Jahweglauben verehrt werden. Bei der Tempelbereinigung beseitigt König Josias die Rosse, die seine abtrünnigen Vorgänger der Sonne aufgestellt hatten, und verbrennt die Sonnenwagen. Es wird sogar der Platz bezeichnet, wo diese Wagen aufgestellt waren, nämlich bei der Zelle des Kämmerers Nehanmelek. Für uns wäre es interessanter gewesen, etwas über die Gestaltung dieser *vehicula religiosa* zu erfahren. Da als Abgötter u.a. Baal, die Sonne, der Mond und die Tierkreisbilder genannt werden, handelt es sich um Heiligtümer der typischen Art für Naturgottheiten, wie sie in Vorderasien weit verbreitet

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69) Tacitus, *De Origine, moribus ac situ Germanorum* libellus. II Teil. Vierzigstes Kapitel.

70) Ph. Klüber, *Germania antiqua*. Leiden 1616. Bd. III. Seite 107.

71) Wie 1) Seite 125.

tet waren und mit der Vielweibervirtschaft fremdländischer Frauen immer wieder an den jüdischen Königshof eingeschleppt wurden <sup>72)</sup>).

Die vorderasiatischen Himmelsgötter werden sehr frühzeitig mit dem Wagen in Verbindung gebracht, was in der Natur der Sache liegt. Auf vielen Darstellungen aus der ältesten Zeit des Zweistromlandes kehrt z.B. das Motiv des Gottes auf dem Wagen wieder, und es ist anzunehmen, daß in einem entsprechenden Kultdienst der Wagen als Bestandteil des Gottesdienstes eine Rolle spielte.

Auf einer Vase aus Chafadschi bei Bagdad aus der Mesilimzeit erkennt man eine Kultszene aus dem Innin-Tammuz-Glauben <sup>73)</sup>. Auf einem Siegelabdruck aus dem Jahr 2400 v.u.Z., der in Ur gefunden wurde, ist der Gott Schamasch bei der Besteigung des Tages-Himmelswagens zu sehen, während er eine Zeile höher als Benutzer eines Bootes für seine nächtliche Runde dargestellt wird <sup>74)</sup>.

Als typisch griechischer Gott auf dem Wagen hat u.a. Dionysos anlässlich seiner Weihefestspiele zu gelten. Durch das delphische Kultzentrum hängt der Dionysoswagen auch mit dem Apollokult zusammen. Allerdings sind Wagendarstellungen mit Apoll erst verhältnismäßig spät in den kultischen Dienst aufgenommen worden <sup>75)</sup>.

Erst im 7. Jahrhundert schuf die Kunst die Gestalt der Lichtgottheit auf dem Wagen; vielleicht unter östlichem Einfluß. Jedenfalls ist anzunehmen, daß der künstlerischen Gestaltung eine kultische Verwendung der Idee voranging. Dargestellt werden auf Vasen: Eos, die Morgenröte, Helios, die personifizierte Sonne und mit Apollon gleichgesetzt, Selene, die Mondgöttin, sowie andere Gottheiten auf ihren Wagen. Apollon hat einen eigenen, mit dem Schwanenwagen eng verknüpften Kultdienst in Delphi <sup>76)</sup>. Wie Alkäus es in seinem Pään darstellt, wird Apollon durch die Chöre in Delphi aus dem Lande der Hyperboräer im Frühling herbeigerufen <sup>77)</sup>. Seltsam, daß trotz der Gestaltungsfreudigkeit der Griechen gerade dieser Transportvorgang weder in Plastik, noch in Malerei auf uns gekommen ist; lediglich im Wagen von Dupljaja wird eine barbarisierte Abart dieses dreirädrigen

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72) Altes Testament. 2. Könige. 23. Kapitel. 11. Vers.

73) A. Moorgat und Scharf. Ägypten und Vorderasien im Altertum. München 1950. S. 232.

74) Wie 5) Seite 425.

75) Wie 27) Seite 1276.

76) Wie 33) Seite 499.

77) M. P. Nilsson. Griechischer Glaube. Franke. Bern 1950. Seite 29.



Apollonwagens vermutet. In der Poesie allerdings ist Apollons Schwanenwagen zum geflügelten Wort geworden und wird bei Griechen und Römern immer wieder zitiert. Jedenfalls sind sowohl Dionysos, als auch Apollon zuletzt Götter, die den Wagen als göttliches Fahrzeug benutzen. Sie bekämpfen sich nicht, sondern ergänzen sich in ihrer Wirkung: neun Monate regiert Apollon in Delphi, während der drei Wintermonate dagegen Dionysos. Dann verstummt der Päan, und der Dithyrambus erklingt! Der Dionysoskult hat ekstatische Züge, die jedoch von dem legalistischen Apollodienst „unter Kontrolle“ genommen werden. Dionysos wird auf einer Vasenzeichnung aus Bologna auf einem Bootskarren als Götterfahrzeug dargestellt <sup>78)</sup>). Schiffswagen als Träger göttlicher Ausrüstungen sind häufig, von ihnen wird noch gesondert berichtet werden. Bei den Umzügen im Rahmen der dionysischen Kultorgien fuhr ein Jüngling als Vertreter des Gottes auf einem Götterwagen. Seine Begleiter stimmten den Bocksgesang oder die Tragödie an, woraus sich die Tragödie entwickelt haben soll. Hin und her gehen uralte Verbindungen zwischen dem Wagen und der Schauspielkunst: es sei nur an den berühmten Thespiskarren erinnert, auf dem einer der frühesten griechischen Schauspieler durch das Land gezogen sein soll! <sup>79)</sup>).

Der Dionysosumzug mit dem Gott im Wagen wiederholt sich bei den Römern in den sogenannten Bacchanalien. Auch bei dieser Gelegenheit wird ein als Gott verkleideter Mensch auf einem *vehiculum religiosum* im Zuge mitgeführt. Es haben sich Abbildungen dieser *tensae* oder Götterwagen bis in unsere Zeit erhalten <sup>80)</sup>).

Verfolgt man den Weg, den der Kultus dieses Gottes und seines Wagens genommen hat, so verfällt man auf Thrakien als das Ursprungsland des Dionysos-Bacchus, der in seiner Heimat Sabazios heißt. Er geht mit den Thrakern nach Kleinasien. Bei den mit den Thrakern stammverwandten Phrygern wird er als Sabazios-Dendrites verehrt und durch Einbringung eines auf einen besonderen Wagen geladenen Baumes geehrt, worüber noch unter Hilfsfahrzeugen des Kultus berichtet wird <sup>81)</sup>).

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78) M. P. Nilsson. Geschichte der griechischen Religion, Beck. München 1955 Taf. 36,19.

79) Wie 78) Seite 539.

80) Wie 58) Band I Seite 268 Fig. 2 und 4.

81) Wie 27) Seite 1031.

Es besteht ursprünglich ein großer Gegensatz zwischen den griechischen und den römischen Umzügen mit Wagen: Bei den Griechen nimmt alles Volk teil, bei den Römern aber wird dieser Staatskult nur von Priestern durchgeführt. Das *carpentum*, der zwei — oder vier-rädrige Spezialwagen für den Transport der Götterbilder, war ein völlig geschlossener, mit einer Bedachung ausgestatteter Wagen, in den das Volk keine Einsicht nehmen konnte. Später wurde das *carpentum* zur kaiserlichen Staatskarosse. Das ist eine völlig logische Entwicklung dieses *vehiculum religiosum*, denn den Caesaren wurden ja göttliche Ehren erwiesen! <sup>82)</sup>).

Die altvedischen Götterwagen gelangen erst spät zu bildlicher Darstellung und zur Anwendung im Kultgebrauch. Erst aus dem Jahr 300 v.u.Z. sind interessante Götterwagen nachweisbar, zwei — und vier-rädrige Kultfahrzeuge mit den Figuren des Surya, d.h. der Sonne, mit Chandra und Soma darauf. Die Zugtiere sind ungewöhnlich und phantastisch: ein siebenköpfiges Pferd und ein bockartiges Geschöpf. Surya ist von einer breiten Sonnenaureole umgeben, Chandra oder Soma mit der Mondsichel im Rücken sitzt in Buddahaltung mit untergeschlagenen Beinen auf hohem Wagenkissen <sup>83)</sup>).

Endpunkt der indischen Götterwagen-Entwicklung ist der sogenannte „Dschaggernath“, ein Götterfahrzeug, das einen ganzen Tempel auf Rädern darstellt. Ein schiffsrumpffartiger plumper Unterbau trägt auf vier mannshohen Vollrädern das Götterbild und auf einem Säulenkranz ein pyramidenartiges Dach. Der gesamte Aufbau ist mit Schnitzwerk und Fähnchen förmlich überladen. Die Festzugteilnehmer ziehen den Götterwagen an Stangen und Seilen, während voranschreitende Tubenbläser die unentbehrliche Geräuschkulisse darstellen <sup>84)</sup>. Nach dem Fest wird der fahrbare Tempel in einen Winkel abgestellt und bleibt bis zum nächsten Umzug unbeachtet.

Im Kulddienst gibt es nicht nur fahrbare Tempel, wie den eben beschriebene Dschaggernath, sondern auch eine Art Kombination von Brandaltar und Fahrzeug. Solche leichten fahrbaren Räuchereinrichtungen spielen z.B. eine Rolle im etruskischen Totenkult. Aus einem

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82) Wie 58) Band II Seite 442.

83) G. C. M. Birdwood. *The Industrial Arts of India*. Chapman, London and Hall, Covent Garden. Plate A. Vedic Gods. 1884.

84) Vollständige Völker-Gallerie. Wagenfahrt der Hindus. Ohne Jahr. Indien Tafel 12. Meissen bei Goedsche. Pest bei O. Wigand.

Grab in Caere stammt ein Gerät mit vier vierspeichigen Rädern, das auf einer Platte aus verziertem Bronzeblech ein kleines Vorratsgefäß für Räucherwerk und eine große Feuerpfanne trägt. Ähnliche Geräte sind in Veji, Praeneste und Vulci gefunden worden.

Die Zeremonie des Räucherns dient verschiedenen Zwecken: Als sakrale Opferhandlung soll sie den Toten für kurze Zeit auf die Erde zurückrufen, und als praktisch-hygienische Maßnahme soll sie den Leichengeruch von den empfindlichen Nasen der Hinterbliebenen fernhalten! Welcher Wert gerade auf die Fahrbarkeit der Opfergeräte gelegt wurde, geht u.a. daraus hervor, daß vielfach sogar die Feuerzangen für die Räucherwägelchen mit Rädern ausgestattet wurden<sup>85)</sup>.

Vielleicht haben auch andere Modellwagen von merkwürdiger Gestaltung, die gemeinhin als Parfumwagen, Plattenwagen oder Gefäßfahrzeuge bezeichnet werden, religiösen Zwecken gedient. Das gilt auch für die sogenannten Vogelwagen aus Mittel- und Nordeuropa, die bereits mehrfach in anderem Zusammenhang erwähnt wurden. Die Hallstattvögel, mit denen sie ausgeschmückt sind, werden als Sonnensymbole gedeutet. Erste Anzeichen dieses Typs treffen wir bereits auf den skandinavischen Felszeichnungen aus dem Jahr 1000 v.u.Z. In Back, Gemeinde Brastatt z.B. sitzen auf der Deichsel eines kleinen drei- oder zweirädrigen Wägelchens Vögel; und die Nachbarschaft eines großen Götterbildes läßt die Verwendung des Bildes zu kultischen Zwecken vermuten<sup>86)</sup>.

Zwischen Oder und Elbe sind die zahlreichen bronzenen dreirädrigen und zweirädrigen Vogelwagen gefunden worden, z.B. in Frankfurt-Dossen, Ober-Kehle, Burg im Spreewald Groß-Perschwitz Kreis Militsch und in Eiche-Golm<sup>87)</sup>. Die Kultwagen dieses sogen. Lausitzer Stils frappieren durch ihre Einheitlichkeit. Das Gestell läuft nach hinten in eine Tülle aus, in welche beim Fahren ein Stab gesteckt wurde. Die Vorderenden des gabelartigen Gestells tragen Vogelköpfe, teilweise mit Stierhörnern auf der Stirne, wie bereits früher bemerkt wurde. Vom dritten Rad an der einen Achse ist wohl behauptet worden, es sei ein herabgerutschtes Sonnensymbol, das ursprünglich auf dem Wagen angebracht war<sup>88)</sup>.

85) Wie 30. Seite 72.

86) J. Bing, Studien über skandinavische Felszeichnungen, Mannus VI. Band 1914. Kabitzsch. Würzburg. Seite 166. Abbildung 18.

87) Wie 38) Seite 40, 42 und Abbildung 4.

88) Wie 31) Seite 191.

Diese Ansicht kann als überholt gelten, da ja inzwischen festgestellt ist, daß der dreirädrige Geisterwagen uraltes Mythengut darstellt. Abzulehnen ist auch die Auslegung, daß die Vogelwagen Nachbildungen großer Kultobjekte sind <sup>89)</sup>. Dagegen spricht die offensichtliche Fahrbarkeit und Benutzbarkeit in kultischen Diensten. Aus ähnlichen Gründen scheidet die Benutzung der Vogelwagen als Deichselaufsatz aus. Es gibt tatsächlich Wagenmodelle als Deichselaufsätze, wie man sie in armenischen Hügelgräbern der Bronzezeit gefunden hat; aber gerade die haben unbewegliche, angegossene Räder, was also gegen die Deichselaufsatz-Hypothese der Vogelwagen spricht.

Dagegen bestehen offenbare Zusammenhänge der Vogelwagen mit den sogenannten Gefäßwagen, über deren Benutzungsart Nachrichten mancherlei Art vorliegen. Es ist anzunehmen, daß auch die Vogelwagen ähnlichen kultischen Zwecken dienten, wie sie nachstehend für die Gefäßwagen beschrieben werden <sup>90)</sup>.

Man nimmt an, daß die charakteristische amphorenähnliche Form vieler Gefäßwagen auf phönikische Einflüsse zurückgeht. Die zehn Kesselwagen des salomonischen Tempels z.B. hat der Phönikier Hiram aus Tyrus geschaffen, wie in der Bibel nachzulesen ist <sup>91)</sup>. Geht man auf die hebräischen Urtexte zurück, deren Schilderung ganz offenbar auf Autopsie beruht, so kann man grundsätzliche Fehler bei den heutigen Schilderungen der Gestalt dieser kultischen Hilfswagen feststellen, z.B. bei Keller in seinem Buch: „Und die Bibel hat doch recht“ <sup>92)</sup>. Möge die Bibel immerhin doch recht haben, aber Keller hat in diesem Fall bestimmt unrecht! Seine Darstellung zeigt einen viereckigen, kastenartigen Wagen mit gleichbleibendem Querschnitt. Dagegen spricht der Urtext von den Kesseln, die auf runden Hälsen ruhen und durch vier Streben mit dem vierrädrigen Wagengestell verbunden sind. Man erkennt daraus die phönikische Amphorenform, die in späteren Gefäßwagen immer wiederkehrt. Zunächst bei dem interessanten Wagen von Krannon in Thessalien.

Seine Gestalt ist uns aus dem Prägebild einer Münze dieser Stadt aus

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89) M. Hoernes. Natur- und Urgeschichte des Menschen. II Band. Urgeschichte der Kultur IV-VII. Hartleben. Wien und Leipzig 1904.

90) Wie 30) Seite 57.

91) Altes Testament I. Könige VII, 27-39.

92) W. Keller. Und die Bibel hat doch recht. Econ. Düsseldorf 1955. Seite 194. Abb. 33.

dem dritten oder zweiten Jahrhundert v.u.Z. bekannt <sup>92a</sup>). Auf den Langbäumen eines vierrädrigen Wagens ist eine Amphora befestigt. Auf jedem Rad ist ein Vogel als Schmuck angebracht, durch den die Beziehung zu den Vogelwagen angedeutet wird. Bei anhaltender Dürre führten die Bewohner von Krannon den Wagen mit Pomp herum und schlugen dabei an die eherne Amphora wie an eine Glocke, um Regen von den Göttern zu erflehen.

In der übrigen mittelländischen Welt sind ebenfalls Kultwagen dieser „phönikischen“ Form anzutreffen, desgleichen bei den nordischen Kesselwagen, z.B. bei dem Gefäßwagen von Ystadt in Schonen, dessen Kessel auch als Amphore ausgebildet ist <sup>93</sup>). Auch der Wagen von Peckatel in Mecklenburg zeigt Anklänge an die Amphorenform, sodaß auf ähnliche kultische Verwendung geschlossen werden kann.

Abgeschlossen wird die Reihe der Hilfwagen im Kultdienst durch genauere Schilderungen der vorher bereits erwähnten Baumwagen des Dionysos und des Bootswagens der Athene.

Aus den Trümmern der armenischen Stadt Toprach Kale stammt die Abbildung eines Hilfwagens, wie er bei den Feierlichkeiten zu Ehren des Dionysos-Dendrites verwendet wurde. Es handelt sich um einen vierrädrigen Plattenwagen, dessen Aufsatz besondere Vorrichtungen für das Anbinden eines heiligen Baumes trägt, der vom Walde unmittelbar in das Heiligtum in feierlicher Prozession gefahren wurde. Hinterher schreitet ein König oder Priester, gefolgt von einem geflügelten Fabeltier. Vor und hinter dem Wagen sind Sterne dargestellt, und die Deichsel ist durch eine Querstange für die Beförderung des Wagens durch die Hände der Umzugsteilnehmer gekennzeichnet <sup>94</sup>).

Ebenfalls als Kult-Hilfwagen dient die uns bereits als Leichwagen bekannt gewordene Kombination von Boot und Wagen. Ein wichtiger Staatsakt war innerhalb der alle vier Jahre wiederholten Panathenäen der feierliche Zug nur Akropolis. Mit hinaufgezogen wurde ein Wagen mit daraufmontiertem Schiff, dessen Segel aus dem neuen Mantel für die Athenestatue bestand <sup>95</sup>).

Schiffswagen spielen auch in den Umzügen neuerer Zeit eine Rolle. So wird von einem derartigen Vehikel aus dem Jahre 1133 u.Z. be-

92a) Wie 30) Seite 64.

93) Wie 35) Seite 234.

94) B. B. Piotrowski. Das Wan-Reich. Verlag Östlicher Literatur. Moskau 1959. S. 229.

95) Wie 77) Seite 24.

richtet, das in St. Trond mehr als 12 Tage verweilte <sup>96)</sup>). Die bei den früheren französischen Karnevalsumzügen mitgeführten Sonnenräder sollen ursprünglich auch auf Schiffswagen montiert gewesen sein. Der Grundgedanke bei diesen Umzügen mag gewesen sein, daß die auf den Wagen befindlichen Ausstattungsstücke oder Symbole der Gottheit Passanten und Demonstranten Heilung, Glück und Segen bringen sollten. Damit nähert sich ihre Funktion den Wagen mit richtigen Göttern darauf, wie z.B. dem Nertuswagen, dem Fahrzeug von Frey usw. <sup>97)</sup>).

Es liegt nahe, den Wagen, der in seiner materiellen Erscheinungsform den Leichnam zum Begräbnis und als Geisterfahrzeug die Seele ins Jenseits bringt, nun auch als Transportmittel zu denken, das besonders bevorzugte Menschen oder göttliche Persönlichkeiten unter Umgebung der dunklen Todespforte unmittelbar in den Himmel befördert. Es handelt sich hier um die sogenannten Himmelfahrtswagen. Zurückgehend auf den uralten Gedanken des Gottes auf dem Wagen, entsteht im späten Mitraskult die Vorstellung von der Rückkehr dieser göttlichen Persönlichkeit auf lichtsprühendem Sonnenwagen in seine himmlische Heimat. Die mysteriöse, unmittelbare Vereinigung mit den überirdischen Mächten wird hier mit Hilfe eines Wagens durchgeführt. Ähnliche Züge weist die biblische Erzählung von der Himmelfahrt des Propheten Elias auf <sup>98)</sup>). Der gläubige Elisäus sieht mit eigenen, leiblichen Augen, wie ein Feuerwagen mit Flammenrossen davor erscheint, von seinem Meister Elias bestiegen wird und im Sturm himmelwärts fährt. Hier wird sogar einem normalen Menschen, obwohl einem Gewaltigen unter den Geistern, die leibliche Himmelfahrt ermöglicht, und zwar unter Einschaltung eines Wagens.

Für die Einschaltung des Himmelfahrtswagen mag die Veranlassung in der Beobachtung zu suchen sein, daß auch dort oben ein Wagen verkehrt, ein Sternbild. Es fährt auf einer besonderen Bahn, der Milchstraße. Um also zum Himmel und über den Himmel zu fahren, muß man ein Räderfahrzeug haben, genau wie auf den irdischen Straßen. Manche meinen sogar, der Anblick des Sternbildes des Wagens habe zu der Erfindung des irdischen Räderfahrzeuges geführt! <sup>99)</sup>).

Diese Ansicht ist natürlich längst überholt und widerlegt. Selbst wenn

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96) Wie 34) Seite 120.

97) Wie 34) Seite 121.

98) Altes Testament 2. Könige. 2. Kapitel, Vers 11.

99) Wie 1) Seite 128.

es stimmt, daß die Maya vor der Spanierinvasion die Symbole von Rad und Wagen gekannt haben, die technische Verwendung des Wagens aber in Altamerika bekanntlich nicht stattgefunden hat<sup>100)</sup>, so könnte es höchstens als Hinweis gewertet werden, daß die Mayapriester bei ihrer Zuwanderung den Begriff des Wagens mitgebracht, auf eine technische Realisierung des Gedankens aber aus irgend welchen Gründen verzichtet haben.

In der Optik wird gelehrt, daß erst der Gegenstand da sein muß, ehe sein Spiegelbild entsteht. Und die *vehicula religiosa* sind bedeutsame und hochinteressante geistige Spiegelbilder praktischer technisch verwendbarer Wagen.

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100) Wie 58) Band I Seite 3.

# TOTENRITUS BEI DEN NORMANNEN ODER WIKINGERN AN DER WOLGA IM ZEHNTE JAHRHUNDERT

VON

A. E. VAN GIFFEN  
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MONTELIUS gibt in seinem Buch über die schwedische Kulturgeschichte <sup>1)</sup> ein Gespräch zwischen zwei Männern wieder, von denen der eine einem Volk angehört, das seine Toten begrub, der andere einem, das seine Toten verbrannte. Während beide einen eben in Brand gesteckten Scheiterhaufen betrachten, sagt der zweite zum ersten: „Ihr seid doch ein dummes Volk. Ihr nehmt den Mann, der euch von allen der liebste und geehrteste ist, und werft ihn in die Erde, wo ihn kriechende Tiere und Würmer fressen; wir hingegen verbrennen ihn in einer kurzen Stunde, so dass er unmittelbar und ohne langes Warten in das Paradies eingeht“. Darauf setzt er, vor Freude lachend, hinzu: „Die Liebe, die sein Herr und Gott für ihn hegt, macht, dass der Wind schon bläst und ihn in einem Augenblicke mit sich nimmt“. Das Gespräch hat der Mann aus dem Land aufgezeichnet, in dem man die Leichen unverbrannt beerdigte.

MONTELIUS fügt noch hinzu: „Mögen die Ursachen nun gewesen sein welche sie wollen, sicher ist, dass die Leichenverbrennung eine Revolution oder Evolution in den Vorstellungen über das Leben nach dem Tod bedeutet“.

Die oben erwähnte Mitteilung ist auch für uns von Belang, da sie auf einen — wie wir bald sehen werden — authentischen Bericht eines Augenzeugen zurückgeht, der zu Anfang des zehnten Jahrhundert bei einer Verbrennung zugegen war. Dies ist umsomehr von Bedeutung, da wir zugleich die verschiedenen Auffassungen und Vorstellungen über den Totenritus bei der Verbrennung und dem Begräbnis kennen-

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1) MONTELIUS, O., Kulturgesch. Schwedens 1906, S. 134. In diesem Zusammenhang ist ein drastischer Ausspruch bemerkenswert, den LUTHER einige Tage vor seinem Tod gemacht haben soll, dass er nämlich den Würmern einen kräftigen Doktor zum Fraße geben würde.



lernen werden, wie sie zu jener Zeit bei den skandinavischen Wikingern oder Normannen und bei den islamitischen Arabern aus Bagdad bestanden haben.

Es hat mich viel Mühe und Zeit gekostet, die von MONTELIUS nicht genannten Quelle des obenstehenden Gesprächs aufzuspüren. Dr. Holger ARBMAN hat mir schließlich in einem Brief vom 7. Mai 1951 die nötige Auskunft gegeben. Das Gespräch scheint vom mohammedanischen Verfasser und arabischen Reisenden Ibn FADLAN, FADHLAN oder A'hmed Ben FOSZLAN zu stammen<sup>2)</sup>. Dieser wurde im zehnten Jahrhundert (923) vom Kalifen MUKTEDIR (907-932) als Beauftragter und Leiter einer Gesandtschaft zum König von Bulgarien geschickt. Das Ziel bestand darin, bei den Bulgaren an der Wolga den Islam zu verbreiten<sup>3)</sup>. FOSZLAN wurde hiermit beauftragt, obwohl bei dieser Gesandtschaft auch ein spezieller „Fagih“ anwesend war. Er starb im Jahre 921.

Die Gesandtschaft verließ Bagdad im Juni 921 und erreichte Bulgar an der Wolga am 11. Mai 922. Diese, wie die vorausgehenden und folgenden Begebenheiten erfahren wir aus einem Bündel von ca. 500 arabischen, persischen und türkischen Urkunden — einem Konvolut, das 1819 der Vorsitzende der Kaiserlichen Russischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Petersburg, Prof. OVWAROFF, gekauft hatte. Dieser gab alle Urkunden an FRÄHN weiter, der sie studieren sollte und dessen Aufmerksamkeit vor allem auf die merkwürdigen geographisch-historischen Werke von JAKUT gezogen wurde<sup>4)</sup>. Dieser JAKUT, später JA<sup>2</sup>KUB genannt — d.h. Rubin oder Saphir — war ein Rummy, gebürtig

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2) Vgl. a) FRÄHN, C. M., Ibn FOSZLAN's und anderer Araber Berichte über die Russen älterer Zeit. Text und Übersetzung etc., nebst (S. 139-55) drei Beilagen überzogen. Russen-Stämme und Riero, die Warenger und das Warenger-Meer, und das Land Wisu, ebenfalls von arabischen Schriftstellern. Petersburg 1823, bes. S. 1-23 und Anmerkungen, S. 25-138: Ibn FOSZLAN über die heidnischen Russen. b) TOGAN, A. Zeki Validi, Ibn FADLAN's Reisebericht. Deutsche morgenländ. Gesellsch. Leipzig 1939: das Schlußkapitel (S. 196b-212 b) der von TOGAN 1923 in Mesched entdeckten „Ibn al-Fagig-Handschrift“. Vgl. seine „Berichte in J.A., Bd. 204 (1924), S. 149-150 und „B.A.R.“ 1924, S. 237-248, wie seine „Bemerkungen“ in der Heidelb. Geogr. Z. 40, 1934, S. 368, und P. KAHLE in Z.D.M.G. 88, 1934, S. 12, bzw. 43-45.

3) FRÄHN, l.c., S. IX.

4) JAKUT's Werke, sein großes geographisches Wörterbuch und seine geographischen Homonymen wurden später von WÜSTERFELD, Leipzig, 1866-73 und von GÖTTINGEN 1846 veröffentlicht.

aus dem Land von Rum, wozu auch Kleinasien gehörte. Ursprünglich ein Sklave, der von einem Araber in Hama (Syrien) gekauft wurde und nach Bagdad kam, arbeitete er sich später empor, reiste viel und wurde ein hervorragender Gelehrte auf geographisch-historischem Gebiete. Er lebte von 1178 oder 1180 bis 1229.

Es waren besonders seine Schriften, die FRÄHN interessierten. Dies ist nicht verwunderlich, denn die älteste Kenntnis der Araber über die Gebiete und Völker zwischen dem Schwarzen und dem Kaspi-See und an der nördlich sich anschließenden Wolga gingen ungefähr bis fünf Jahrhunderte weiter zurück als die frühesten russischen Schriften von NESTOR, einem unbekannten oder kaum bekannten russischen Chronisten <sup>5)</sup>. Diese ungefähr 1229 abgeschlossene Nestorchronik handelt über die alten Völker und den Ursprung von Russland in der Zeit zwischen 850 und 1100. Die Araber waren jedoch infolge ihrer guten Handelsbeziehungen viel besser unterrichtet.

Da die Kenntnis der östlichen Sprachen außerhalb der Sphäre der damaligen russischen Gelehrten lag, war es für die Forscher der alt-russischen Geschichte von besonderer Bedeutung, als W. OUSSELEY 1800 ein arabisches geographisches Werk aus dem Beginn des zehnten Jahrhundert publizierte — ein Werk, welches entscheidende Neuigkeiten über das russische Volk enthielt, namentlich über die Phasaren <sup>6)</sup>. Noch mehr gilt dies für zwei im Jahre 1814 erschienene Bücher von RASMUSSEN <sup>7)</sup> und HABICHT <sup>8)</sup>.

Nun traf FRÄHN unter den genannten Schriften auch ein ausführliches Exzerpt von JAKUT aus FOSZLAN's Reisebeschreibung an. JAKUT erwähnt nichts über die Geburt und den Stand des Verfassers, doch wohl seine schon genannte Sendung durch den abassidischen Kalifen

5) „NESTOR“ (unbekannter Chronist, vielleicht der Abt SYLVESTER des sog. Höhlenklosters von Kiew); ihm wird die „Nestorchronik“ zugeschrieben, welche die Jahre 850-1110 behandelt. Publiziert 1767 in St. Petersburg; neue Ausgabe 1860 in Wien von MIKLOSICH.

6) OUSSELEY, W., *The oriental geography of Ebn. KAUHAL etc.*, London, 1800.

7) RASMUSSEN, *Om Araberns og Persernes Bekjendtskab og Aandel i Middelalderen med Russland og Skandinavien*, in *Molbechs Athene*, Bd. II, Kjöbenhavn, 1814, S. 177-225, 297-321 und 444-470 u.a.; umfasst auch Ibn-FOSZLAN's Schilderung der Sitten und Gebräuche bei den heidnischen Russen.

8) HABICHT, *Beschreibung des Kaukasus und der nördlich von demselben und dem Kaspischen Meere gelegenen Länder*. Abgedruckt in KLAPROTH, *Russlands Vergröss. unter Alexander I etc.*, Berlin 1814; der bedeutende Bericht befasst sich mit einem Zug der Russen in das Gebiet des Kaspischen Meeres, mit Chasaren und Bulgaren etc.

MUKTEDIR zum König von Bulgarien. FOSZLAN muss also zweifellos eine bedeutende Stellung am Hofe von Bagdad eingenommen haben.

Nach seinem Auftrag, so berichtet JAKUT weiter, kehrte A'HMED nach Bagdad zurück. Dabei traf er an der Wolga auf heidnische Russen. Über diese Begegnung gibt er ein kostbares Bild; es ist für die „*origines Russicae*“ wie auch für uns höchst bemerkenswert, darin die Normannen zu erkennen, wie sie uns die fränkischen und englischen Schreiber vorstellen. So ist dieser Reisebericht eine unschatzbar wertvolle Urkunde und als solche ist sie von den besten Kennern der alt-nordischen Geschichte, wie MAGNUSSEN und KRUG, auch gewertet worden. Körperbau, Kleidung, Waffen, Schmuck, Sitten und Gewohnheiten dieses Volkes wurden beschrieben. Wir erfahren etwas über seine Handelswaren und religiösen Gebräuche. Zudem wird uns ein lebendiges und außergewöhnlich interessantes Bild über seinen Totenritus vor Augen gestellt.

FRÄHN schätzte deshalb JAKUT sehr und dies um so mehr, als er Ibn FOSZLAN's eigene Berichte nicht finden konnte, obwohl JAKUT zahlreiche Abschriften erwähnt<sup>9)</sup>. FRÄHN spricht über den Bericht von FOSZLAN gewöhnlich als „*Risalet des Ahmed Ben FOSZLAN, gesandten MUKTEDIR's an den König der „Slawen“*“<sup>10)</sup>.

Kommen wir zur Sache. A'hmed gibt einen authentischen Bericht über die Zeremonien, die bei dem Begräbnis eines Angesehenen ausgeführt wurden. Er erzählt, welch großer Aufwand dabei gemacht wurde. Hierbei spielte die Verbrennung jedoch nur die geringste Rolle. Er wünschte deshalb, die Zeremonien genauer kennenzulernen — was ihm gelang, da man ihm schließlich den Tod eines ehrwürdigen Großen berichtete.

Zu Anfang legte man den Toten in ein Grab stellte darüber für zehn Tage ein Dach<sup>11)</sup>, bis man mit dem Zuschneiden und Nähen der

9) 1923 hat A. ZEKI VALIDI TOGAN, wie sich zeigte, die Handschrift in Meschede entdeckt; s. auch FORNVÄNNEN 1939, wo eine Handschrift von Ibn FADLAND veröffentlicht wurde, die 15 Jahre eher gefunden wurde.

10) Es sind jedoch keine Slawen, sondern Bulgaren.

11) Das erinnert uns einerseits an die sog. Totenhäuser in den vorgeschichtlichen, besonders bronzezeitlichen Hügelgräbern in unserem Gebiet, andererseits an solche Gräber, die ich am Sonntag, den 24. Juni 1951, bei Nordhorn kennenlernen konnte (nach einer freundlichen Benachrichtigung durch die Tochter von Dr. KRUMBEIN). S. STEILEN, D., Volkstüml. Grabgestalt im nördlichen Niedersachsen, *Die Kunde*, Jg. 8, 1940, S. 197 ff., Bes. S. 200-204, unter „Totenhut“. S. auch im

Totenkleder fertig war <sup>12)</sup>). Darauf sammelte man Hab und Gut des Toten, teilte es in drei Teile und verfügte darüber wie folgt: einen Teil erhielt die Familie, mit dem zweiten Teil wurden die Totenkleder bezahlt und für den dritten Teil kaufte man einen Trank („nabis“). Diesen trinken sie an dem Tag, an welchem ein Mädchen zusammen mit seinem Meister verbrannt wird. Dann trinkt man über alle Maßen — Tag und Nacht hindurch. Und so geschieht es öfters, daß einer mit dem Becher in der Hand stirbt.

Da nun der besagte Mann verstorben war, frug man die diensttuenen Mädchen, ob eines mit ihm zusammen sterben wolle. Eines von ihnen antwortete mit Ja. Dieses ward zwei anderen Mädchen anvertraut, die es ab jetzt bewachen und überall hin begleiten mußten. Inzwischen begann man die Totenkleder fertig zu machen, derweil weitere Vorbereitungen für die Bestattung getroffen wurden. Das Mädchen trank nun jeden Tag, sang und war fröhlich und aufgeweckt.

An dem Tag, als der Tote und das Mädchen verbrannt werden sollten, ging ich — so berichtet FOSZLAN — zum Fluß, wo das Schiff lag. Dies war schon an Land gezogen und mit Hölzern verkeilt worden. Um das Schiff herum stellte man große hölzerne Figuren, die Menschen glichen. Danach wurde das Schiff auf einen Holzhaufen gesetzt. Der Tote lag jedoch immer noch — vorläufig beigesetzt — in einem Totenhaus.

Nun holte man eine Ruhebänk, stellte sie auf das Schiff und legte auf sie wattierte und geknüpft, mit griechischem Goldstaub überzogene Decken und Kopfkissen. Danach kam eine alte Frau, der sog. Todesengel, und rückte die Decken und Kissen auf der Bank zurecht. Sie versorgte fortan die Totenkleder und die gesamte Ausstattung. Sie war es auch, die das Mädchen töten sollte. Ich sah sie — so FOSZLAN —: Sie war ein Teufel mit einem düsteren und grimmigen Blick. Als man nun zum vorläufigen Grab kam, räumte man die Erde vom Totenhäuschen weg, entfernte dieses selbst und zog den Toten mit dem Kleid, in das er gehüllt war, aus dem Grab. Ich sah, wie er durch die vorherrschende Kälte ganz schwarz geworden war. Auch nahm man aus

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BEOWULF's Lied, wo auch zehn Tage für die Errichtung des Grabes erwähnt werden: KIEKEBUSCH, A., Das Königsgrab von Sedin, 1928, S. 19.

12) Das geschah bei einfachen Leuten nicht. Dort wurde der Tote in ein kleines Schiffchen gelegt, welches man verbrannte. Was dann weiter folgte, erzählt A'hmed Ben FOSZLAN nicht.

dem Grabe betäubende Getränke, Früchte und eine Laute, kurzum alles, was man dem Verstorbenen schon mitgegeben hatte. Im übrigen war die Leiche noch nicht verändert. Man zog dem Toten Unterkleider, eine Hose und Stiefel an und bekleidete ihn mit einem „kurtak“ und einem mit Goldstaub und goldenen Knöpfen versehenen Kaftan. Daraufhin setzte man dem Toten eine mit Hermelin (Zobel) und Goldstaub besetzte Mütze auf. Danach trug man ihn in das Zelt auf dem Schiff, legte ihn auf die Bank und stützte ihn mit den Kopfkissen. Dann brachten sie „nabis“, Früchte und (Basilien)kräuter und legten dies alles neben ihm. Auch Brot, Fleisch und Eier legten sie vor ihm nieder. Etwas später brachten sie einen Hund, schnitten ihn entzwei und warfen die beiden Teile in das Schiff. Daraufhin legten sie alle Waffen des Toten neben ihm, holten zwei Pferde, jagten diese solange, bis sie vor Schweiß tropften, schlugen sie dann mit ihren Schwertern tot und warfen das Fleisch in das Schiff. Dies geschah auch mit einem Paar Ochsen. Zum Schluß holten sie einen Hahn und eine Henne, schlachteten sie und warfen sie ebenfalls in das Schiff.

Inzwischen wandelte das zum Tode geweihte Mädchen auf und ab, um dann in eines der Zelte, die aufgeschlagen waren, hineinzugehen. Da legte sich einer der Bewohner neben ihm nieder und sagte: „Sag Deinem Herrn, nur aus Liebe zu Ihm tat ich dies.“

Am Freitagmittag brachte man das Mädchen zu einem Gestell, das einem hervorspringendem Türrahmen ähnelte. Es setzte seine Füße auf die Handflächen der Männer, sah auf das genannte Gestell nieder und sagte etwas in seinen eigenen Sprache. Darauf ließ man es sinken und wiederholte das Ganze noch zweimal. Dann gaben sie ihm eine Henne; es schnitt ihr den Kopf ab und warf diesen weg. Den Rumpf warf man jedoch in das Schiff.

FOSZLAN frug nun den Führer, was es gesagt hatte. „Das erste Mal“, so war seine Antwort, sagte es: „Schau, ich sehe meinen Vater und meine Mutter“; das zweite Mal —: „Schau, nun sehe ich auch meine gesamte Familie, die gestorben ist“. Das dritte mal rief es aber: „Schau, da ist mein Meister; er sitzt im Paradies. Das Paradies ist so schön, so grün. Er ruft mich; bringt mich doch zu ihm“.

Daraufhin führten sie das Mädchen zum Schiff. Es nahm nun seine beiden Armringe ab und gab sie dem sog. Todesengel. Die Beinringe gab es dagegen den Mädchen, die es bedient hatten und welche die Töchter des Todesengels waren. Man hob es auf das Schiff, doch ließ

man es noch nicht in das Zelt hinein. Daraufhin kamen Männer mit Schildern und Stöcken und gaben ihm einen Becher mit dem betäubenden „nabis“. Es nahm den Becher, sang und leerte ihn. Hiermit — so der Führer — nahm es Abschied von seinen Geliebten. Danach wurde ihm ein zweiter Becher gereicht. Es nahm auch diesen und stimmte ein langes Lied an. Die alte Frau trieb es jedoch an, sich zu beeilen, den Becher zu leeren und in das Zelt, in dem sein Meister lag, zu gehen. Das Mädchen war aber scheu und unsicher geworden; es wollte schon in das Zelt gehen, doch blieb nur sein Kopf zwischen dem Zelt und der Schiffswand stecken. Schnell nahen die Alte es beim Kopfe, schob es in das Zelt und folgte zugleich mit ihm hinein. Sofort begannen die Männer mit ihren Stöckern und Schildern zu schlagen, so daß das Geschrei des Mädchens nicht gehört werden und die anderen Mädchen nicht abschrecken oder unwillig machen konnte, zu ihrer Zeit auch den Tod mit ihrem Meister zu verlangen. Darauf gingen sechs Männer in das Zelt und „wohnten samt und sonders dem Mädchen bei“. Nachdem sie es vergewaltigt hatten, legten sie es neben seinen Meister. Zwei fassten es nun an seine Füße, zwei an seine Hände; der „Todesengel“ legte ihm einen „Strick“ um den Hals, gab die äußeren Enden zum Halten zwei Männern, trat dann selbst mit einem großen Messer heran und stieß es zwischen die Rippen des Mädchens. Die beiden Männer würgten es jedoch mit dem Strick, bis es tot war.

Nun trat der nächste Blutverwandte des Verstorbenen nackt heran. Er nahm ein Stück Holz, zündete es an und ging rücklings zum Schiff, mit dem brennenden Holz in der einen Hand — die andere hielt er auf dem Rücken — bis das unter dem Schiff gelegte Holz angezündet war. Darauf kamen auch die anderen mit Luntten und sonstigen Holzstücken; jeder hielt ein Stück, das am oberen Ende schon brandte, und warf es auf den Holzhaufen. Schnell ergriff das Feuer den Haufen, bald darauf das Schiff, dann das Zelt mit dem Mann und dem Mädchen und allem, was auf dem Schiffe war. Inzwischen war ein heftiger Wind aufgekommen, wodurch die Flammen und die Glut noch mehr verstärkt wurden.

Neben mir — so FOSZLAN — stand ein Mann, den ich mit meinem Führer hatte sprechen hören. Ich frug ihn, was er gesagt hatte. Der antwortete: Er sagt, Ihr Araber seid doch ein dummes Volk; ihr nehmt den Mann, der euch von allen der liebste und geehrteste ist, und werft ihn in die Erde, wo ihn kriechende Tiere und Würmer fressen; wir

hingegen verbrennen ihn in einer kurzen Stunde, so daß er unmittelbar und ohne langes Warten in das Paradies eingeht. Darauf setzt er, vor Freude lachend, hinzu: Die Liebe, die sein Herr und Gott für ihn hegt, macht, dass der Wind schon bläst und ihn in einem Augenblicke mit sich nimmt. Und in der Tat, kaum danach waren Holz, Schiff und Mädchen zusammen mit dem Toten zu Asche geworden.

Dann schüttete man dort, wo das aus dem Fluss gezogene Schiff verbrannt war, einen kuppelförmigen Hügel auf und pflanzte mitten darauf einen großen Birkenstamm. In die Barke ritzte man den Namen des Verbrannten und seines Königs und ging danach davon.

Viel prunkvoller — so berichtet FOSZLAN — ist die Verbrennung ihrer Könige. Die Sitte will, dass 400 der Tapfersten und Treuesten seiner Gefolgschaft sich mit dem König in seinem Palast verbrennen lassen. Jeder hat ausserdem ein Mädchen mit sich, das ihn bedient, sein Haupt wäscht und seine Mahlzeiten bereitet. Auch hat er noch ein anderes Mädchen für den Beischlaf. Diese 400 sitzen zu Füßen des „Hochsitzes“ des Königs. Dieser ist groß und mit kostbaren Edelsteinen verziert. Auf dem Thron lässt der König 40 Mädchen — bestimmt für den Beischlaf — neben sich Platz nehmen. Bisweilen begnügt er sich damit, nur mit einem im Beisein des gesamten Gefolges zu schlafen. Er steigt nicht von seinem Thron herab. Will er seine natürlichen Bedürfnisse verrichten, dann tut er es in eine Schale; will er reiten gehen, bringt man sein Pferd bis zu seinem Thron, von wo aus er es besteigt; will er absteigen, dann reitet er so dicht an seinen Thron heran, dass er sich ohne Mühe auf ihn niedersetzen kann. Er hat einen Stellvertreter — einen Kalifen oder Vizekönig — der sein Heer leitet, mit dem Feind Krieg führt und seinen Platz bei seinen Untertanen einnimmt.

Dies sind die Auskünfte — nach FRÄHN — die ich (wörtlich) aus Ibn FOSZLAN's Schrift entnommen habe. Für die Glaubwürdigkeit mag der Schreiber Bürge stehen. Gott weiss besser als wir alle, ob dies zutrifft.

Am Ende dieser Mitteilung bezeuge ich Herrn Michael Müller Wille meinen herzlichen Dank für seine Übersetzung in deutscher Sprache.

## ARTHUR DARBY NOCK

21.II.1902-11.I.1963

As a person, as a scholar and as a friend Arthur Darby Nock was truly unique. The immediate impression of incredible learning is registered already by those who met him in the early 1920's in Trinity College and in Clare College, Cambridge. And yet he was born in 1902. In 1929 he came to Harvard, and there he stayed. As a friend he was a bridge between the continents and the generations. His extensive international correspondence during forty years has become a major, partly anonymous, contribution to the studies in the history of Greek, Roman and Early Christian religion. Much of the material which would have been included in the never published edition of his Gifford Lectures (1938-39; 1944-45) has thus found its way into the legacy of these disciplines. And into the extensive and penetrating book reviews (especially in *Gnomon*), which constituted his major contribution during his later years. His name is lastingly tied to the studies of Sallustius (1926), St. Paul (1933; paperback 1963) and the text of the *Hermetica* (1945-54). His sections in vols. 10 and 12 of *The Cambridge Ancient History* will continue his influence.

One would not go far wrong by suggesting that his whole scholarship is held together by an unusual combination of genius and common sense. He had a contempt for "Tiefsinnigkeit", which to him was plain hybris. To Nock the essence of religion was not in philosophy and theology but in piety and cult. Thus his scholarship was directed toward finding and understanding what "the little man" of antiquity thought, felt and believed. When he quoted Plato and others among the great, he used him as a reporter on the common man's attitudes. Typical and brilliant is his lecture on "Religious Attitudes of the Ancient Greeks" (*Proc. Amer. Philos. Society*, 1942), and "Conversion" (1933) has that same thrust. All this made Nock an excellent interpreter of Early Gentile Christianity. His study by that title (in A. E. J. Rawlinson, *Collection of Essays on the Trinity and the Incarnation*, 1928) will appear in a paperback edition (Harper's) in January 1964. Its preface, an autobiographical introduction, was one of the last things



he completed before his death. What was written in a glance toward the past, thus became a gracious and challenging testament. The legacy is great.

KRISTER STENDAHL

Harvard University, October 1963.

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